

The
EPISTLE
to the
R O M A N S

A
TRANSLATION
of
STOECKHARDT'S ROEMERBRIEF
by
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Chapter 1

Apostolic Greeting

1-7

Verse 1:

The writer introduces himself to his readers as Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle. By the expression "servant of Jesus Christ" he points to his official position in general. Then he defines his service more particularly as that of the apostleship. He is called apostle. As the twelve apostles of Israel, he was immediately called by the Lord, not through human agency. Acts 9,1ff; Gal.1,1.12. On two separate occasions, at his conversion and as he prayed in the temple, Paul received the special commission of apostle to the Gentiles. Acts 22,21; 26,17. Though he did not, as the Twelve, travel about with the Lord during His lifetime, he yet lacked none of the other prerogatives of the apostleship, the eye-witness and the ear-witness. Paul had seen the resurrected Lord with his eyes, 1 Cor. 15,8, and had received direct instruction from Him concerning the things he should teach. 1 Cor.11,23;15,3.

As apostle, Paul was separated unto the Gospel of God. This separation occurred in and with his call. From then on he continually discharged the special service of proclaiming the Gospel, orally and in writing. The Gospel Paul preached was a message that came from God. What Paul proclaimed, orally and in writing, was God's Word.

Verse 2:

This Gospel was no new teaching but ancient truth, as formerly proclaimed by most authentic witnesses and presented in Scriptures. It was the Gospel which he (God) had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures. To the number of prophets, whom God took into His service, belong all the holy men of the Old Testament who prophesied of Christ and the salvation in Christ, so also Moses and David. And it was God Himself, who spoke through the prophets. Their prophecy is presented in the Scriptures. And it is God Himself, who speaks in the Scriptures. The holy writings are the holy Scriptures of Israel, the Old Testament Canon. As here, so Paul often referred to the fact that his teaching coincided with the testimony of the prophets. "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled." Acts 13, 32.33. "I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." Acts 26,22.

Verse 3:

The apostle has pointed to the divine origin of the Gospel, unto which he was separated, as well as to its agreement with Old Testament Scriptures. Now he states its content. It is the Gospel of God concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Here God Himself testifies of His Son. Paul calls this

Gospel the Gospel of Christ. Rom. 15,19. All the prophets had prophesied concerning Christ. All Scripture points to Christ. And Christ is the Son of God. "His Son," "God's Son," is not merely the official title of the Messiah but indicates, as everywhere in Scriptures, the unique relation of Christ to God. John calls Him "the only begotten of the Father." John 1,14. And Paul, "his own Son," Rom.8,32, and therefore, "God over all," Rom.9,5. In Col. 1,15 the same apostle writes: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." Already in prophetic Scriptures God testified of the Messiah: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Ps. 2,7.

To the content of the Gospel, "concerning his Son," the apostle ascribes two attributes. The first attribute: God's Son which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. According to prophetic promise the eternal Son of God received in the fulness of time flesh and blood from Mary, the daughter of David. He remained who He was. He took the human nature into the unity of His person. For this new existence, which He entered at His birth, the flesh was the important factor. In all things He became like His brethren. He was found in fashion as a man. He had all the peculiarities of human nature, also its weaknesses and infirmities.

Verse 4:

Then came a change. To this the second attribute calls attention. And declared to be the Son of God with power. Was He appointed to be the Son of God? Absurd, for He is that by origin. It is the Son of God become flesh, who is declared to be God's Son with power. He is in the state of absolute divine majesty and exercise of power, translated into the state of glory. In the state of humiliation He had yielded to the weakness of the human nature. He had kept His divine majesty behind the form of a servant. Then, however, He entered into full possession and use of His divine omnipotence and glory. That is what is stated concerning this Son of God, who according to the flesh came from the family of David. David's Son is now God's Son with power. The Son of God made flesh now rules in absolute divine power, also according to His human nature.

Christ is God's Son with power according to the spirit of holiness. This is the other, higher essence, the divine principle in Christ, His other, heavenly, divine nature. The Son of God is spirit, as God the Father, 2 Cor.3,17; and this spirit is spirit of holiness as God is the Holy One, designating "divine other-worldliness." Christ is the Son of God with majestical power and officiates as such according to the measure of His divine, heavenly nature. Since His exaltation it is the eternal Godhead, which predominates in Christ and determines His entire existence. Christ is indeed true God for He has and exercises all power in heaven and on earth. The divine essence and nature with their heavenly splendor permeate also His human nature. Christ now has a heavenly, glorified body and life,

Christ was translated into the state of majestic glory, into His heavenly, God-like mode of existence, by the resurrection from the dead. Christ died, and in death He laid aside human weakness forever. Then He arose from the dead, and as a result is God's Son with power according to the spirit of holiness. The apostle emphasizes that it was a resurrection from the dead, which Christ experienced, and that He now leads an existence from the dead, a new life, an existence altogether different from that He entered at His birth. The prophets had also prophesied of Christ's humiliation and exaltation. Ps.22; Is.53.

The apostle has revealed the Person treated in his Gospel. This Person he calls by His historical name "Jesus Christ" and adds "our Lord." This Jesus Christ, as He has been described, is our Lord. The Son of God redeemed us by His life, suffering and death in the flesh and won us for His own. And the Lord, exalted God, now blesses us from His divine fulness, leads and rules, guards and protects us by His divine power and omnipotence. He is our Lord; and we are His own. He is the Lord, whom we serve, unto whom we live and die.

Verse 5:

To this Lord Jesus Christ Paul is obliged for the special grace which he received. By whom we have received grace and apostleship. Through the Lord Christ he received this gift. It is not necessary to think of Christ as only the Mediator and of God the Father, on the other hand, as the real Originator of this grace. In Gal.1,1 Paul states that he became an apostle through Christ, as well as through God the Father. And so on one occasion he refers his apostleship to Christ, and on another to God the Father. Rom.15,15. In the account of his conversion the exalted Christ appears especially as the One who called Paul and sent him to the Gentiles. Here we simply think of Christ as the Benefactor of the gift Paul received.

The purpose of Paul's apostleship was for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name. He was especially called as apostle to the Gentiles. Through his ministry the obedience of faith should be wrought among the Gentiles. Obedience consists in faith. Christian faith is essentially obedience to God's Word. Paul was separated as apostle to proclaim God's Gospel concerning His Son. This preaching, at the same time, works faith in Him of whom it treats. The Gospel itself works faith. And this faith serves to the glorification of Christ's name. By calling upon Christ as their Lord believing Gentiles honor and praise His name.

Jesus Christ, God's Son, our Lord, shows His divine power and authority by choosing, calling and endowing instruments, as Paul, to proclaim the Gospel, and by effecting through these human instruments and their preaching the obedience of faith, to the glory of His name.

Verse 6:

Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ. The apostle turns to his readers, the Roman Christians. The majority

of them were of the heathen, of those heathen who are already the called of Jesus Christ. In Paul's letters God almost always appears as the One who calls. God has called those who are Christians. By virtue of this call they belong to Christ. This call is identical with conversion. Through God's call, which issues from the Gospel, we are called, drawn to Christ, translated into the fellowship of God's Son. "The called" has become characteristic, the title of the Christians.

Verse 7:

Christians are also called to be saints. Through God's call they become saints, separated from the world and dedicated to God. The other surname of the Roman Christians, and of Christians in general, is beloved of God. God showed His great love to those who are Christians by calling them, by making them believers and saints.

To these Gentile Christians in Rome, who are the beloved of God, the called of Jesus Christ, called saints, Paul now directs himself. He extends his greetings to them. For them this letter is intended. To all that be in Rome contains greetings and dedication. And the apostle writes to all that are in Rome, to all members of the Christian congregation there. He esteems them all as the beloved of God and called saints.

As called apostle, whose mission was especially to the Gentiles, Paul desires to speak and deal with the Christians in Rome and proclaim to them in writing the Gospel, unto which he was separated. Though they came to the obedience of faith without his assistance, nevertheless, he, as their apostle, wishes to strengthen and further them in faith. His Gospel, however, also what he here writes to the Romans, is God's Gospel, God's Word, therefore, the most certain truth.

What Paul has said concerning the content of his Gospel stands in the closest relation to the chief subject of the letter. It offers no detailed christological discussion, but treats soteriological themes, above all, the theme of our redemption and justification. But the article concerning Christ's deity, which the apostle attests so emphatically in the beginning of the letter, stands in the center of soteriology. If Christ is not the only begotten Son of God, then our redemption, justification and salvation fall.

The apostle closes his superscription with the Christian benediction: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace is the free affection and kindness of God, demonstrated especially in the forgiveness of sins. Peace - the objective relation of peace in which Christians stand to God. Believing Christians already have grace and peace. So the apostle wishes that they become secure in their state of grace, in their relation of peace to God. May God, our Father, who is reconciled to you through Christ, grant you this and the Lord Jesus Christ, who has won for you grace and peace.

Introduction 8-15

Verse 8:

The apostle begins the letter proper with a thanksgiving. First, I thank my God. The apostle calls the God, whom he thanks, his God. He refers to his personal relation to God, as well as to the relation through his call. My God. I am His, and Him I serve. Paul thanks his God through Jesus Christ. Gratitude is mediated through Christ, inasmuch as that for which a Christian thanks God is a benefit merited by Christ.

Paul thanks his God for the faith of his readers, the Roman Christians. He thanks God for you all and for this reason that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. Everywhere, in the entire civilized world, it was reported that there was in Rome, the world-metropolis, a host of believing Gentiles. That the faith of the Romans had become so widely known is evidence of its genuineness and purity. In this way Christ, in whom the Christians believed, became generally known, as it were, became the subject of daily conversation. Why should not the apostle to the Gentiles rejoice over this fact and thank God that now also in the heathen metropolis the obedience of faith was established and that from there the report of Christ had spread throughout the whole Roman Empire?

Verse 9:

Such thanksgiving of the apostle, however, is a hidden matter between him and his God. So Paul calls upon God as his witness. For God is my witness. God knows how continually he made mention of the Roman Christians before Him. From this they should gather how he was minded towards them. The Roman congregation, which arose without his assistance and was as yet unknown to him personally, laid as close to his heart as those Gentile congregations which he himself founded.

This God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son. He serves God in the Gospel of Christ, which he proclaims. This service was a divine service, an offering which he brought to God. At the same time, it was a service of his heart. It was not merely an outward, formal, mechanical service, but an inner service. His heart, his spirit, was in it. But even more than that. He took service in the Gospel into his inner life, which he led before God, also into his life of prayer.

That without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers. A true servant of the Word serves God in the Gospel not only when he deals with men and publicly and privately proclaims the Word, but also when he deals alone with his God, when he discusses before and with God how he can best carry out his office, and when he prays for those whom he serves in the Word. Thus Paul discharged his office to the Roman Christians while yet absent.

Verse 10:

Not only in thanking but also in making request, the apostle made mention of the Christians in Rome. He continually made requests in his prayers. And his wishes and prayers were especially directed to this: If by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey, have the good fortune, to come unto you. Paul adds: By the will of God. The rest is in God's hands. God, whose almighty hand directs all circumstances, can very well and will indeed at His own time permit the apostle to come to Rome.

Verse 11:

The reason for his request: For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established. He desired to see the Roman Christians face to face, so that he could impart to them some spiritual gift through the preaching of the Gospel. Whatever he should accomplish in them through his teaching, exhortation and comfort is not to be ascribed to the influence of his human personality but as a gift of God's grace, which they receive through God's Spirit. It is the Spirit, who works all good in men through the human word. The purpose of such imparting was to strengthen and establish them. They had faith, but they yet needed to be strengthened in faith. At the same time, by teaching and establishing them, Paul would like to receive a blessing. Strengthening them would encourage and comfort him also.

Verse 12:

That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. To be sure, such mutual help and strengthening come through mutual faith, their faith and his. In the Roman Christians is the same faith that animates the apostle. When they are together, they will show one another their mutual faith. Paul his own - by teaching, instructing, and giving them evidence of his faith. They their own - by joyfully receiving his word as God's Word. The former would strengthen and encourage the Roman Christians, and the latter Paul.

Teaching God's Word is not something one-sided, that one gives and the other only receives. A reciprocal action takes place. One who teaches and strengthens others is himself blessed. He is edified in that he sees how the Word, which comes from his lips, takes hold of and stirs his listeners and proves itself to be a power of God.

Verse 13:

The apostle wishes and prays that he finally would have the good fortune to come to Rome. Already for a long time had he contemplated such a journey. And now he definitely assures the Roman Christians, his beloved brethren, that he had often resolved to come unto them. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, but was let hitherto. Acts 19, 21. Until the present time he had been kept from carrying out his plan. What hindered him he tells in 15, 20-22. He was appointed to proclaim Christ in the Orient, in all places where the name of Christ was not yet known. A task closer at hand had held him back. He had no personal motive for

giving up or delaying the intended journey. Least of all had a certain indifference toward the Roman congregation, which had arisen without his assistance, kept him away from Rome.

His purpose in coming to Rome was that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. He addresses his readers not as Christians but as Romans. The fruit, which the apostle otherwise had among the Gentiles, consisted in just those Gentiles, whom he won for Christ. Such living fruit, consisting in men's souls, the Lord also has in mind when He says: "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal." John 4,36. So Paul would also like to gain some heathen in Rome for the kingdom of heaven.

In other great cities, in Ephesus, in Corinth, he had reaped a full harvest. In Rome, on the other hand, where a congregation was already in existence, he would be satisfied if he could only add a handful of ears to the sheaves gathered by others. Only "some fruit" was his object. He, he himself desired to have fruit. The converted heathen are fruit, gain for him. The souls which a minister of the Gospel has won for Christ by his preaching will be put to his account by the Lord of the harvest, so that he may rejoice in this gain in the Day of Jesus Christ. Phil.2,16.

Therefore, with his intended journey to Rome the apostle has a double purpose in view. Through the preaching of the Gospel he wants to strengthen the Christians there and to win over still other Gentiles.

Verse 14:

From his proposed journey the apostle comes back to the duty laid upon him as apostle to the Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise. In his call he had received and assumed an obligation to the whole heathen world, which he fulfilled by preaching the Gospel.

The Apostle distinguishes two classes of heathen, Greeks or the Hellenes and the Barbarians. This difference coincides essentially with the other, between wise and ignorant, cultured and uncultured. The Romans belonged to the first class. To the one as to the other Paul owes the Gospel. Therefore, it is well to note: the Gospel of Christ is meant for both civilized and uncivilized people. Barbarianism is so little a hindrance to the effect of the Gospel as worldly culture and civilization are beneficial to it.

Verse 15.

So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. Therefore, because I owe the Gospel to all the heathen, Hellenes and Barbarians, as far as I am concerned, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you Romans also. Only hitherto God has not made it possible for me, has rather hindered me from doing the work, for which I am willing and prepared.

Also from the apostle's desire and plan to come to them the Roman Christians can see how he is minded towards them. They will, therefore, much more willingly give ear to what he is about to write. The apostle is not at this time in the position, nor will it in the very near future be possible for him, to proclaim the Gospel to the Romans. Rom.15,24ff. Therefore, he sends them this letter, which for the time being should take the place of his oral preaching.

-Theme-
16.17

Verse 16:

Why such a strong desire to preach the Gospel in Rome? For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Paul has in mind just that Gospel which speaks of Jesus Christ, God's Son, our Lord. He need not be ashamed of this Gospel even in Rome, the capital of the world, the center of world civilization and culture. Why not? For it is the power of God unto salvation. It is the Gospel that comes from God. Therefore, God's power is active in it. This power of God does what no teaching of man, what no worldly philosophy, is able to do. It helps men to eternal salvation. At the very outset Paul states the final highest goal of the Gospel.

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jews first, and also to the Greek. The prerogative of the Jews over the heathen was that the living God had revealed Himself and His will to them. The Grecian world, representing entire heathendom, was the pride of natural and estranged mankind's development. With regard to the apostle's message of salvation this difference does not come into consideration. Jew and Greek both need the Gospel if they want to be saved. Neither law and works of the law nor worldly wisdom, culture and morality in any wise aid to salvation. Only in one respect, as the elect people, did the Jews have prior claim to the Gospel. Therefore, the apostle always directed himself first to the Jews in pagan cities and then to the Gentiles. Acts 13,46.

Verse 17:

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed. Righteousness is a preliminary condition of salvation. What excludes men from heaven, from salvation, is sin. When the sinner has been made righteous, nothing further stands in the way of his salvation. And this righteousness is the righteousness of God. This righteousness is not an essential attribute of God, nor a moral uprightness in man wrought by God. Rather, the right relation of man to God. Man is regarded as righteous before God, is in the eyes of God as God wants him to be, without fault. It is the righteousness which avails before God.

This righteousness is revealed in the Gospel. This presumes that the righteousness existed before it was revealed. The righteousness before God exists once and for all in Him,

of whom the Gospel speaks, in Christ. Christ firmly established it by His life, suffering and death in the flesh. And because Christ is the Son of God, it is a perfect righteousness, which completely satisfied the great, holy God. Christ, God-man, has set aright the relation of man to God and effected a gracious sentence of God for sinners.

At first this was hidden to men. They would have known nothing of the appearance of God's Son in the flesh and of its purpose had it not been especially revealed to them. Now, however, the righteousness merited by Christ for sinners is revealed, announced and offered at the same time, to the children of men in the Gospel. Paul does not say that ⁱⁿ the Gospel is revealed the way to righteousness, the rule according to which man is justified and saved, but merely that righteousness itself is revealed in the Gospel. Revealed, not as some future blessing that man can obtain or merit for himself under certain conditions but as an actual, unconditional gift. In the Gospel is revealed to men, not only that they can be justified and saved if they believe, but also that righteousness exists for them, that God already has pronounced a favorable judgment upon them, that God in Christ looks upon humanity with pleasure, that sinners have a gracious God.

Faith, of course, is necessary. Only that one rightly defines the relation of faith to righteousness. Therefore, the apostle adds: From faith to faith. Paul does not speak of a growth in faith. He simply characterizes the righteousness of God, on the one hand, as a righteousness from faith, on the other, as a righteousness of God to faith.

The righteousness revealed in the Gospel, first of all, is righteousness from faith. This cannot possibly mean that righteousness is a fruit of faith, that righteousness is wrought through faith. Righteousness is revealed and offered in the Gospel as a perfect gift. The righteousness which avails before God existed before preaching and faith. But this righteousness becomes our's as a result of faith. As soon as one accepts the Gospel of Christ in faith, he comes into possession of the righteousness, which lies prepared and is offered to men in the Gospel.

The righteousness of God is a righteousness to faith, such a righteousness that is prepared and intended for faith. God, who prepared a righteousness for man through Christ, also prescribed that man take this righteousness in faith. Man should simply take what God gives. Then he possesses and enjoys the great blessing on which depend redemption, life, salvation.

The apostle proves he is in agreement with the Old Testament by quoting Hab. 2,4: As it is written, the just shall live by faith. The characteristic of the just is faith, faith which apprehends and holds fast to the promise of the Gospel. This faith makes man just since he takes for his own the righteousness promised and offered in the Gospel. Through such faith the just will finally obtain life, eternal, perfect salvation.

Corruption of the Heathen World
18-32

Verse 18:

From the revelation of the righteousness of God the apostle turns to the revelation of God's wrath. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. He who is righteous through faith will receive life and salvation. In Contrast, he who is ungodly and unrighteous will incur God's wrath. This wrath of God is the inner reaction of divine holiness against sin. When revealed, it appears as punishment, judgment and damnation for all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Ungodliness is personal misconduct against God. Unrighteousness is the denial and violation of divine law, the norm for man's conduct.

When and how does God's wrath reveal itself against ungodly and unrighteous men? May we think of a revelation of divine wrath in the Gospel? In the law? In reason and conscience? In the manifold evils and punishments of this time? No, none of these agrees with the words of Paul: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven."

Whenever God reveals something, it is always an unusual revelation. So we cannot think of the revelation of God's wrath through natural means or events. Nor through the Gospel or Scripture in general. But "from heaven" God's wrath is revealed. This is not the visible heaven, but heaven as the seat of the almighty, majestic God. The God, who lives and is enthroned in heaven, is above and has power over the whole world. From there, from God's other-worldliness, His anger is revealed to godless and unrighteous humanity, so that not a single man can escape Him. And who does not see here the great, solemn, unusual, majestic revelation of God's wrath on Judgment-day? When he states that this wrath "is" revealed, Paul thus speaks of final judgment as being inevitable, certain, beyond doubt.

Godless and unrighteous men are further characterized as those who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Men possess the truth. The truth contains the norm for the right conduct of men. And the truth presses upon them, forces and compels them to a conduct suitable to God. But they reject the truth, keep it down, suppress it. And it is through unrighteousness. Men serve unrighteousness. They do the opposite of truth. Thus they hinder truth. They hinder its effect so that it does not take root in their hearts and influence their lives. The guilt of mankind, therefore, is severe. Their godlessness and unrighteousness are not the result of ignorance but are unpardonable sins, which oppose their better knowledge. Therefore, they justly incur God's wrath.

Verse 19:

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them for God hath shewed it unto them. That which is known of God is known to all men, also to natural man. God Himself, as far as men are able to know Him, that is the truth which they

have suppressed. This knowledge of God is in them, in their hearts. God Himself revealed it unto them. He wrote in their hearts this knowledge of Himself.

Verse 20:

This revelation and knowledge of God were conveyed to men through the works of creation. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen. The invisible things of God, His invisible essence, are perceived, seen. The invisible God is seen in that He, since the creation of the world, is perceived through the works of creation.

It is a spiritual, inner perception. Being understood by the things that are made. The invisible essence of God is understood, inwardly perceived, by an act of reason. Inasmuch as this inner perception is conveyed through the visible things of this world, one can also say that the invisible is seen. Since the world was created, man has the works of creation before his eyes. By looking at them and considering them, he perceives, to some extent, what lies on the other side of, but what has left its trace in, the visible world, namely, God's invisible essence.

Man's knowledge of God is twofold. First, even his eternal power. When one views the great, formal structure of the world, his first impression is that there is a God, who is exalted over the world and time, and that the eternal God has created the ends of the earth. Is.40,28. The completed work, the things that are made, refers back to the highest Cause. The work praises its Maker.. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork, proclaims that the hand of the Almighty has fashioned it.

Secondly, His Godhead. The visible world attests His Godhead, His divine nature, His incomparable greatness and glory. Luke 9,43. Godhead is the sum total of divine perfection. And so the visible world, the splendor, fulness, riches and beauty of its creatures reflect the glory and majesty of the invisible God. As also the usefulness of all created things and that everything serves man point especially to God's wisdom and goodness.

The natural world-view, according to which nature endowed herself so richly and beautifully, is not only against Scripture, but also against reason.

This natural knowledge of God leaves men without excuse. So that they are without excuse. God revealed Himself to men in the works of creation and thus gave them the incentive to appear before Him as is becoming a creature. This truth, God Himself, the invisible essence of God, reflected in the visible world, is the inalienable possession of mankind. And just this truth men suppress through unrighteousness. All men are perverse and err from birth. Mankind, as it is disposed since the fall, the apostle has before his eyes. Men will be able to offer no excuse for themselves when God will judge them concerning their ungodliness and unrighteousness. It is, furthermore, God's will that men on Judgment-day be unable to adduce anything as excuse, to appeal that they did not know better.

Verse 21:

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful. The apostle continues to show how men suppressed the truth, proving thereby that they are inexcusable and subject to God's wrath. Paul does not speak as though men had lost this knowledge. On the contrary, this truth is an actual, permanent possession of men of all times. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them." All men who see the works of creation observe the invisible essence of God. Even the most depraved heathen know that there is a God, and know something about Him. Although men knew God; they did not praise or thank Him as God. They did not let such knowledge influence their conduct. It was their duty, the truth urged them, to honor and praise God as the Creator of all things, and to thank Him as the Giver of all good and perfect gifts. But that they did not and so suppressed the truth and better knowledge. Such was the nature of their evil conduct. But thus they have always done and still do.

This is the moral condition into which they have fallen: they have turned away from the living God. Denying God praise and thanks, they became vain in their imaginations. It was their own fault. They became vain, empty in their thoughts since they aimed them at vain, empty, perishable things. Their intentions and thoughts became absorbed and lost in created things. And divorced from God, the Creator, all creation is vanity.

They neither had insight nor listened to reason. Men closed their hearts to the light which pressed upon them and granted it no influence in their moral thinking, feeling and will. Thus their foolish heart was darkened.

Men have known and still know God. On the other hand their hearts are darkened. These facts agree very well. Rays of light from the works of creation shine into their hearts. They know something of God and cannot escape this knowledge. This light, this knowledge,, however, does not make the least impression upon their moral ego, upon their thinking, upon the course of their will, for they continually hinder its effect. What men know, decide and judge concerning God and divine things is all wrong and perverse. Nor do they have the least desire and inclination to give God what is His. In them is no spark of spiritual light. The apostle himself explains the darkness of their hearts, v.22: Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools. After darkness and foolishness came intellectual conceit.

Verse 23:

The final, most offensive product of vain intellect, of the darkness and foolishness of men, was that they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. The opposite of praise and thanks, which men properly owe God, reaches its climax. Instead of the true, living God men glorified a self-made god, the creature instead of the Creator. This perversion of truth and idolatry came from their moral condition.

The image into which man changed God consisted in the likeness of a human being or an animal. Man changed the glory of the imperishable God, His creative glory, into the image of a perishable man or an irrational animal. Such an image should be a resemblance, an image of the Godhead. Men in their vain, dark and foolish thoughts changed God into a creature. The various divine attributes, of which divine glory consists, they changed into human or animal attributes, and ascribed them to various gods. They thought of God as a mortal man or as an animal and so honored Him under the image, under the picture of a man or an animal, in that they finally deified this image itself.

This idolatrous worship reminds us of the human cults of the Greeks and Romans and of the animal cults of the Egyptians. It is also reminiscent of Israel's idolatry. Ps. 106,20; Deut. 4,15ff. What the apostle says of the gross form of idolatry also concerns all fine idolatry, as the adoration of the sun, moon, stars, or the powers of nature, the veneration of creatures, as is common in so-called Christian world today.

Verse 24:

Having characterized the godlessness of men, the apostle presents their unrighteousness. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness. Therefore, because of their godlessness and idolatry God surrendered them to uncleanness. Uncleanness is here the punishment of godlessness and a divine affliction. God punishes sin with sin. This the world experiences. The curse of the evil deed is that it must produce evil.

What special action or specific judgment of God is meant by giving them up to uncleanness? Through the lusts of their own hearts, by which they were encompassed, which they fostered with great care, God gave the heathen up to uncleanness, to all kinds of works of the flesh, in which their evil lusts became deeds. Conceiving and nourishing sinful lusts in their hearts is presented as their own deed, whereas the outbreak of those lusts in disgraceful vices as divine arrangement and judgment.

Wherein does this divine arrangement consist? Through His Spirit God disciplines and holds sinful men in check, at least outwardly. He instills them with fear and terror of sin. One who has inwardly conceived wicked plans, He warns concerning the actual deed, as He warned Cain before he became a murderer. The Lord admonishes the conscience. In the way of the evil intention He places all sorts of outward hindrances, and thus attempts to restrain the outburst, or at least the coarse outbursts, of the evil lusts of the heart. If, however, man despises these divine exhortations and increases ungodliness, God withdraws His Spirit and all limits and hindrances. Then He completely gives the ungodly up to his sins, so that nothing stands in the way of the gratification of his lusts. In this sense God delivered up the heathen to uncleanness, as punishment for their godlessness, so that without restraint, boldly and unhindered they satisfied their evil desires in all filthiness and unchastity. God surrendered them to themselves, to their own corrupt inclination and will.

To dishonour their own bodies between themselves. That was God's intention. Through the vice of unchastity men and their bodies are disgraced and ravished. Unchastity takes from them all honor which they have as creatures of God. At this God aimed when He gave them up to uncleanness. By exposing their bodies to shame He wanted to punish them for their godlessness and so divest them of their created honor.

Verse 25:

Returning to the motive of God's action, the apostle shows the agreement between sin and punishment. Who changed the truth of God into a lie. The truth of God is God Himself, the true God. The lie is the idol. Men changed the true, living God for idols, falsely-called gods. They worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator. This worship was the adoration of their hearts, their service the external cultus and offering. Poor, foolish men turn their whole heart and all their powers to idols. The creature they serve, neglecting the Creator. They worship the creature and not the Creator - who alone deserves all praise, honor, adoration, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

The apostle cries out in holy agitation as he intercedes for the honor of his God and Creator. Idolatry, deification of the creature, is an abomination whereat all upright Christians, who know, fear and love God, are rightly enraged and indignant. Men disgraced God by degrading Him to the level of a creature. And it is avenged, since they disgrace themselves, their own bodies according to God's judgment. He who takes from God, the Creator, His due honor, trifles away and loses his own honor and sinks to the level of an animal.

Verse 26:

Becoming more emphatic, the apostle continues: For this cause God gave them up to vile affections, that is, because of their idolatry. God surrendered them to shameful passions, which enslaved and ruled them. Paul has in mind one special vice, the rudest, most perverse kind of lewdness, prevalent in the Roman world just at his time.

For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. Their wives changed the natural use of their sex by practising unchastity with other women.

Verse 27: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly. Men and women denied the natural, created relation of both sexes to one another, upon which rests the permanence of the human race, and turned the proper act of this relation into an unnatural one. If it has free course, lust of the flesh finally degenerates into the rudest monstrosities.

Because of such unchastity, under which they are enslaved, men receive their just reward according to God's righteous recompense. And receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. It is suitable punishment for their iniquity, that they turned from God to idols. That perversion of truth into a lie avenges itself upon them. Idolatry is not only

a blasphemy of God but also atrocious unnaturalness. The boundary between Creator and creature is completely disarranged if honor is deprived the Creator and transferred to the creature. Upon such unnaturalness in the religious sphere there follows, by God's decree, unnaturalness in the moral sphere. The created difference between man and woman, as concerns sexual use, is completely arrested. Man and woman are, as it were, divested of their nature.

Verse 28:

The apostle introduces a new guilt of men, which also appears as a punishment inflicted upon them by God. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. God had made Himself known to them. Men knew God, but they lacked inner conviction of this knowledge. They did not have this knowledge subjectively. They did not make use of it, not thinking it worth the trouble. And the punishment suited the transgression: God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. Just as they did not deem it worthy to have God in their knowledge, just as they rejected God and the knowledge of God, so in like manner God gave them over to a vile mind, so that they freely and unhindered adapted themselves to their perverse disposition, so that they did what, according to their own judgment, was not proper. Along with knowledge of God there is also implanted in man's heart knowledge of good and evil. However, even this moral knowledge men denied by their disposition and deeds.

The apostle has special kinds of evils in mind. The common thing in the transgressions listed is that the neighbor is harmed and love to him violated. Four series of transgressions are distinguished. Men are full of all deceit, and not merely guilty of isolated errors and vices. From head to foot there is nothing sound in them.

Verse 29:

The first series reads: Being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, malisciousness. (The reading of the word fornication adopted by the King James is not genuine and does not fit into the context.) Men are filled with all unrighteousness, violating the neighbor's rights and denying him the justice due. Wickedness and malisciousness, malice and deceit, designate the evil, wicked intention towards the neighbor. Covetousness inconsiderately looks for its own profit, to the neighbor's harm.

In the second series follow special vices, individual proofs of unrighteousness and wickedness. They are such as generally flow from greed and avarice. Full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity. Envy does not grant another what is his and often leads to this that he is put out of the way. If it does not go that far, then one begins quarrels and contentions with his neighbor over their possessions, or plans to harm him secretly, by treachery. Malignity is essentially bad character, then spite or malice.

Verse 30:

The third series of transgressions begins thus: Whisperers, backbiters. Men harm not only one another's body and goods but their honor. Despiteful, proud, boasters. Being despiteful is characteristic of a person who in his insolence deals abusively with his neighbor. Being proud - of one who raises himself, his own ego, over all others and looks upon them contemptuously. Boasters are those who boast of their own excellence and merits and grant others nothing. Such deep contempt for the fellow man, as though he were not on the same level, such abasement of his person, is the worst harm one can do him. And such arrogance is a special abomination before God. Therefore, the apostle especially states that such people are hated by God. (The original Greek for haters of God is only used passively. The King James is, therefore, incorrect.) Finally, Paul calls them inventors of evil things. They are inventive, artful in malice, always thinking up new ways to harm their fellow men.

Verse 31:

The fourth series describes the evil disposition and immoral deeds of men negatively. They are disobedient to parents. Without understanding, permit no one to tell them anything. Covenant-breakers. Without natural affection, loveless, destroying all natural affects of love. Implacable. Unmerciful, hard-hearted to the need of their fellow men. In short, they deny all piety, all human feeling and compassion. They have become true monsters. Why? Simply because they did not let God be their God. Only where God is known, feared and loved is true humanitarianism found.

Verse 32:

Indeed, God gave men over to a reprobate mind, who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. Men knew God's demand for justice. It was written in their hearts what God's will was concerning the conduct of men toward one another. As God is righteous, just and gracious to His creatures, so men should show justice and love to their fellow men. And they also know that whosoever does those evil works are worthy of death. Since they by their evil deeds disturb the peaceful social life of men and disrupt human society, they have no right to exist upon earth. Although men know this, they do the opposite of what is right. More than that, they applaud them who pursue those evils, as it were, as their profession. Thus they show their pleasure in things which, according to their own judgment, are misdeeds worthy of death.

Men have robbed God of His honor and have given it to the creature; they serve unrighteousness and uncleanness; they deny their fellow men all justice and love. Thus has the apostle described the world which he had before his eyes, the cultured Graeco-Roman world. The high degree of culture, which the world had achieved at his time, included a very deep moral decay. To all outward appearances everything was inwardly rotten and decayed.

Since Paul speaks of natural man estranged from God, this description of morals also fits the generation of our day. One cannot better characterize the religious and moral condition of our civilized world than with these words of the apostle.

It is a God-~~forgetting~~, idolatrous generation which lives upon earth. Who yet thanks God for His goodness, to which men owe their life and all blessings? The religion, the pseudo-religion, of the world is the deification of the creature. The world deifies her great men, her heroes, deifies herself, her own power, wisdom, excellence and achievements. The philosophical contemplation and adoration of God are nothing else than changing God into an image of weak, mortal man. Man views God and divine things according to human standards.

The generation of this age is an adulterous one. The world feasts her eyes upon and delights in the lusts of the flesh, shame and filthiness. Man's carnal desires are no longer satisfied by common adultery but long for the unusual, refined enjoyment. Unnaturalness and unchastity of the apostle's time have today only assumed another form and appearance.

It is a murderous generation in which we live. Avarice, insatiable envy, is the mainspring of commercial life. Man has no consideration for his neighbor. Every one strives to rise in the world and thus ruins and tramples upon others. It is idle scorn and mockery when the world writes humanitarianism or universal love upon her standard.

And this stream of destruction rushes onward incessantly. One can no longer check and restrain this disgraceful state of things. In vain are all attempts at reform. Men are, as it were, chained to unrighteousness by iron fetters. And why? A destiny rules over the activities of the children of men. God has given them up to their corrupt ways. Knowledge of God and morality has not altogether ceased. Man still hears proclaimed what is right before God and men. But whatever exists of truth serves only to call forth opposition, to goad men on to do the opposite of what is right. Therefore, men have no excuse. The world is continually driving herself forward to the abyss, to the Day of Wrath and the righteous judgment of God.

Chapter 2

Judging Others Increases Guilt

1 - 5

Verse 1:

The apostle has exposed the deep moral corruption of the heathen world. From the mass of people he now draws out one man and says to him: Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, who-soever thou art that judgest. This one man represents the whole class. Paul enters into judgment with such who habitually pass unfavorable, damning judgments upon others, and take pride in doing so. These people condemn others because of their evil works. Yet they are without excuse. They know God's precepts; nevertheless, they perpetrate those evils mentioned before. What is more, they applaud evil-doers. He who sins against better knowledge has no excuse, and so he who judges another is also inexcusable.

In this respect he has no excuse: For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. He who judges condemns himself in the sentence he pronounces upon others, because he himself does for what he rebukes others. And so he verily has no excuse, for by his deeds he denies not only his own better knowledge but the moral judgment which he urges.

The apostle distinguishes three classes of unrighteous men. Some serve unchastity and unrighteousness, disregarding their conscience and without exactly thinking of excusing and justifying their evil deeds. Others do the same and defend, gloss over and praise what, as they well know, is perverse and worthy of death. There is yet a third class of men who, on the contrary, rebuke and condemn evil, but only in others, not in themselves. They themselves boldly do what they condemn in others. They soothe their conscience by thinking that they possess and pronounce the right judgment. And these people are the worst.

Such deluded men really exist. At all times there have been such foul, sanctimonious moralists and judges of morals, who become indignant at the malice of others while they themselves are guilty, if not of the same, then of other crimes equally serious. They judge the mote in the eye of others and do not care to see the beam in their own. So corrupt is the human heart that it convinces itself and finally believes that right knowledge, speech and judgment balance and adjust perverse actions. Of this sort are mostly those people whom the world admires and praises highly as heroes of virtue and prophets of morality.

Verse 2:

In the name of all Christians the apostle asserts: But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. The final, decisive judgment of God on Judgment-day will be pronounced upon those whom the apostle has before him here. He who always does evil will receive God's judgment, even though he rebukes others for their evil. This judgment is according to truth, that is, in reality, truly, against evil-doers, opposing a false idea of man.

Verse 3:

And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Every moralizer fancies that he himself will escape God's damning judgment; that God will make an exception in his case; that the merit of better knowledge and right judgment, in spite of his actions to the contrary, will safeguard and protect him before God's tribunal. But the apostle appeals to his reason: Do you actually think that? Does your opinion hold water? O man, it should not be difficult for you to see that your's is an idle hope. With such glaring contradiction between word and deed you cannot stand before God.

Verse 4:

Paul opposes another wrong idea: Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? The person, with whom Paul is dealing, makes the appeal that at present everything is going well, and thus draws the conclusion that God has nothing against him. Yes, indeed, God is now showing the riches of His goodness to sinners and lavishes many blessings upon them. Daily He lets His sun rise on the good and evil and sends rain upon the just and unjust. And He is patient and longsuffering above measure; He endures the offense they give Him and defers punishment.

What is the purpose of such goodness? It is to lead the sinner to repentance, to a change of heart. As the truth, revealed in the works of creation, urges and compels men to give glory to God and so live to please Him; so the goodness of God, enjoyed by sinners in this time of divine patience and longsuffering, constrains and incites them to repent and turn from their evil ways.

But how do men accept God's goodness? As they keep down the truth through unrighteousness, so they fail to appreciate, do not wish to know, that God's goodness leads to repentance. Thus they also despise the riches of divine goodness, patience and longsuffering and stifle the impression which God's blessings make upon their hearts and minds. Therefore, the experience of divine goodness must finally serve to make men inexcusable.

Only those who are led to repentance and are converted through God's Word and Spirit, the only means of grace and salvation, open their hearts to divine goodness and love and make use of the time of patience and longsuffering to the salvation of their souls.

Such a man who judges others but not himself shows that he despises divine goodness, patience and longsuffering. And now the apostle asks him, appealing to his conscience: What? You despise the riches of divine goodness? Do you take that upon yourself? Do you venture to defy the great, all-gracious, patient, longsuffering God?

Verse 5:

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. The man who himself commits the evil for which he rebukes others is neither frightened by God's impending judgment nor touched by His goodness. Instead of repenting and forsaking his evil works, he rather increases wrath for himself, according to his impenitent heart, according to his obduracy, wherein he opposes all influence of God's goodness. He heaps sin upon sin; he misuses the rich gifts of divine goodness to satisfy his carnal lusts; he utilizes the time of divine patience and longsuffering for evil-doing. In this manner he stores up wrath for himself. While God shows him the riches of His goodness, patience and longsuffering, he amasses for himself an evil treasure of wrath. And this wrath will be poured out upon him when it has reached its limit, on the Day of Wrath when God's patience and longsuffering will end and His goodness will give way to His anger, on the Day when His just judgment will be revealed to all men.

God's Judgment Impartial

6 - 16

Verse 6:

Who will render to every man according to his deeds. God will show His righteousness in the judgment of both those that do good and those that do evil. The judgment upon the first:

Verse 7: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life. God will reward some according to their perseverance in well-doing with glory and honor and immortality in that they look for eternal life.

The apostle speaks of well-doing, not of good works. Well-doing is considered as the one continuous, uniform lifetime work of those who persevere in good until the end. According to such enduring good work God will on that Day acknowledge them and give them eternal life. Glory - in the kingdom of their Father the righteous will shine forth as the sun. Matt. 13, 43. Honor - they will reign with Christ. 2 Tim. 2, 12. Immortality - they will receive the pure, unspotted, immortal blessings of the future world. 1 Pet. 1, 4. Those are the three leading features of eternal life. The persons spoken of search for eternal life, earnestly desire to be saved, as their zeal in well-doing shows. And they will finally find what they are seeking.

Verse 8:

The judgment upon the evil-doers: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath. The moral condition of evil-doers proceeds from contention, selfishness, self-interest. They are self-willed, who exert their evil ego everywhere. Therefore, they do not obey the truth, which is against their corrupt ego, but rather obey unrighteousness, inwardly allied to and approved by them. Truth in the moral sphere, God's law and will concerning men's conduct, is meant. This truth the self-willed oppose,

although it was made known to them by natural revelation or by the Word. Eph. 4,21; 6,14. They who are thus disposed and serve unrighteousness will receive indignation and wrath on the Last Day.

Verse 9:

The apostle repeats and reverses the twofold reward of works. Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil. The fury and wrath of God will bring tribulation and anguish, hardship and distress, upon evil-doers. The godless will not know what to do nor whither to turn on Judgment-day. Such severe misery will come upon every individual soul of man that does evil. Verse 10: But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good. Peace is as much salvation, perfect salvation, complete welfare and well-being.

The reward of God is general, affects both Jew and Greek, with regard to the reward of the evil as well as of the good. To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. Also here the Jews have a prerogative over the heathen. God had revealed Himself especially to the Jews. They had the law and the promise. To them first the Gospel should be preached. So also in God's judgment they will have precedence. They will be the first and nearest objects of divine judgment.

Future Reward

As here, so Scripture in many places speaks of the future reward. On Judgment-day Christ the Lord will reward every one according to his works, whether good or bad. Throughout Scripture man's works appear as the actual norm of judgment. But how is this to be understood, especially with regard to good works? It is to be noted that the concept of norm does not necessarily imply the concept of merit. Indeed, the godless on account of their evil works deserve hell, but the pious do not deserve eternal life on account of their good works. To be sure, Christians will be rewarded in heaven for everything they did and suffered on earth out of love for God and Christ. Matt. 5,12. Nor must the reward of works always exactly correspond, according to extent and value, to what man has done. Death, wrath and damnation are indeed adequate punishment for man's evil deeds. A judge would deal unjustly if he sentenced an evil-doer more severely than he deserved. On the other hand, it stands in the free opinion of the judge how high he will establish the reward for good works. And it does not contradict justice if he in this case lets his goodness dominate and rewards lesser works richly and superabundantly. We know that the reward of God, the reward of eternity, will greatly surpass the Christian's works. Reward according to the norm of works means nothing else, nothing more and nothing less, than that God will requite good with good and evil with evil. And that is evidence of divine justice. 2 Thess. 1,5.6.

However, it is necessary to go a step farther and consider who the persons are that do good and that do evil. Christ himself, in that solemn description of the Final Judgment, explains the reward according to works. Matt. 25, 31-46. When the

Son of Man will come in His glory and sit upon the judgment-seat, He will welcome, praise and lead into eternal life those who performed good works. On the other hand, those who did nothing but evil He will reject and banish into hell-fire. In this connection the Lord gives accurate information concerning the nature of both classes of men. Those who stand at His right and have done good resemble sheep: they are the sheep of His flock, His believers. The others, who stand at His left and have done evil, resemble goats: they are those who are hostile to Christ, the unbelievers.

What will determine salvation and damnation on that Day are faith and unbelief. Faith however, of necessity brings forth good fruits. It manifests itself before men in all manner of good works, while the unbeliever remains and lives in sin and unrighteousness. And so the Lord in the Final Judgment will show the faith of His own by their good works and thereby justify His decision before the whole world. At the same time, He will reward the good works of His own with eternal life, which He gives believers out of grace. The unbelievers, who lived and died in their sins, will receive the due reward of their evil works in everlasting torment. It must be remembered that, according to Scriptures, the faith and good works of believers are the work of divine grace. Thus all semblance, as though the grace of God ceased to function in the reward of works, disappears, for God in and with the reward of good works only crowns His own work.

Verse 11:

In the reward of works God will make no distinction between Jew and Gentile. For there is no respect of persons with God. God would be partial if He in His judgment permitted Himself to be influenced by the outward prerogatives of the Jews over the Gentiles. But that is not the case. God is impartial.

Verse 12:

For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law. Standing at the Final Judgment Paul looks back and says that the heathen have sinned. Those who have sinned without possessing a positive law, namely the heathen, will perish without law, without being judged according to the norm of a positive law. The future lot of those without the law will suit their transgression.

And as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. On the other hand, those who have sinned possessing a positive law, namely the Jews, will be judged and sentenced by the law, according to the norm of their law. Therefore, whether with or without possession of the law, whether Jew or Gentile, in both instances the sinner incurs the judgment of God. And the prerogative of the Jews over the Gentiles, namely the revealed and written law, will, if they have transgressed the law, in no wise remove God's judgment. The transgressors of the law will rather be judged and damned by the law.

Verse 13:

For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. The hearers of the law

are the Jews. They possessed the law and on the Sabbath heard it read in their synagogues. They were proud of this hearing of the law. However, those who merely hear the law are not, because of this mere hearing, righteous before God. Rather will only the doers of the law be justified. Only those who do the law are declared righteous by God.

In this verse Paul has made a general statement. Some say that this statement contains only an abstract rule and is hypothetical. "If man would keep the law, fully and completely, then he would be regarded by God as righteous. However, there are no such men; and since no flesh can become righteous by the works of the law, then righteousness comes by faith." That is all perfectly true. But it is a question whether such considerations are really in place here. The apostle is not contrasting the righteousness of the law, based upon the doing of the law, and the righteousness of faith, but only the difference between hearing and doing the law. He only stresses that God judges man not according to the hearing but according to the doing of the law. The discourse is not concerning the mode of justification. How the sinner is justified before God is first dealt with in 3,21ff.

One must further consider that the apostle elsewhere speaks of those who actually fulfill the law. Rom. 8,4; 2,26.27. They are the Christians, those born again, 2,29, who have the Holy Ghost, 8,2. Believing Christians are regarded in Scripture as doers of the law. Believers walk in the commandments of God, are obedient to His law. They love God. For that reason they keep His commandments. Though they do not perfectly fulfill the law, their shortcomings are covered up by the perfect righteousness of Christ.

This interpretation of doers of the law is indicated in the context of the present discourse. The doers of the law are identical with those who do good and persevere in good works until the end. And doing the law is only possible in the power of justifying grace. If the believers are indeed doers of the law, then they will also be regarded by God as such. And no more is really said in this verse concerning justification.

Even if one understands this as actual justification, there still is not taught a justification by works on the basis of the fruits of faith. To say that the doers of the law are justified, or to say that they are justified on account of works, are two different things. According to Scriptures the situation is this: What places us in the right relation to God, that is faith alone; what protects the sinner before the face of the holy God, already now and finally at the Last Judgment, what makes him righteous before God, in time and in eternity, that is alone Christ's blood and righteousness, which he accepts in faith, with the exclusion of works. But he who has become righteous by faith in Christ shows his faith in good works, in the fulfillment of the law. For true faith is a living and working thing. And on that Day Christ the Lord, as He Himself taught in Matt.25,31ff., will commend His believers for exercising mercy, for serving Him among His humbler brethren, for fulfilling the chief commandment

of love. He will show their faith by their works, will acknowledge and present them before the world as righteous, Matt. 25, 37.46, while the others who are barren of such works He will judge. And to this open judgment of the Last Day we refer the justification under discussion. A double judgment will precede the double reward, of which Paul has spoken: a damning judgment for the transgressors of the law and a judgment of pardon for the doers of the law.

Verse 14:

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves. Paul does not mean that the heathen always and that all heathen do the things contained in the law, but that this often happens among the heathen. It often happens that they who have no law, as the Jews had, do the precepts of the Law. Without having the law, they yet do what the law demands. And they do it by nature, that means, not by natural powers, but led thereto by their own nature and not by a commandment, without having been instructed in the law of Moses.

This statement is, for the most part, referred to so-called civil righteousness, also found among the Gentiles, since the apostle ascribes to the heathen, not a doing of the law altogether but only a doing, an observance, of certain demands of the law. And in reality there were and are yet heathen whose conduct shows a certain outward conformity to the law, who live honorably and righteously. There are heathen unbelievers, taught by their own nature, who avoid gross outrage and vice, carry out industriously the works of their calling, direct their house well, give alms to the poor, etc. Yes, it often happens that otherwise wicked men shrink from certain transgressions, as lies, perjury, treason, and now and then arouse themselves to noble deeds.

And as often as the Gentiles do what is commanded by the law, they are, not having the law, a law unto themselves. The Gentiles do not have, possess, hear the law, as the Jews, but are a law unto themselves. It is not that they make God's will their own, that their will agrees with God's will. The heathen tell themselves what the Mosaic law tells the Jews, what is good and what is evil. They know of themselves what they should and should not do.

Verse 15:

The Gentiles are indeed a law unto themselves. For they shew the work of the law written in their hearts. The apostle does not say that the heathen are deeply concerned about fulfilling the law. He declares that the heathen, those without the law, know something of the law, have a counterpart of what the Jews possess in the revealed law. What is written in their hearts is the work demanded by the law, therefore, the demands of the law. The Jews had the law inscribed on stone tablets and recorded in the Torah. The heathen find a similar inscription of the law in their hearts, which essentially demands of them what the written law demanded of the Jews.

What is here said of the heathen is, of course, applicable to all men. The law is implanted in all men and is a supplement of human nature. One may rightly say that the heathen are taught by their own nature what is right and wrong. But natural law does not belong to the real, natural essence of man. Nor is it the product of the human ego or spirit. Man hears in his heart the voice of this law. But this voice is the voice of another, the master of his ego, and tells him what he should and should not do. The written law in the heart is the will of God, the voice of God, the Creator, to whose will all creatures are bound and who in this way reveals to men what He will have them do.

That the heathen do the things contained in the law is the first proof that the law is written in their hearts. A second proof is the testimony of their conscience.

The heathen show the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness. Conscience is not identical with natural law. Natural law is the norm, God's demand, shows man what is good and what is evil, prescribes what he should and should not do. Conscience, on the other hand, does not demand but judges the individual acts of man. It is one's own knowledge appearing as witness; it declares the moral quality of human actions. Conscience tells man whether what he wants to do, does, or has done, is or was right or wrong. And it judges according to that norm implanted in man's heart. It is not in itself the source of the knowledge of good and evil, but forms its judgment from natural knowledge of the law. Since the law is God's law, there is revealed in the judgments of the conscience what God judges concerning man's actions.

The apostle further characterizes the testimony of the conscience. And their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another. Thoughts are not the products of the thinking, reflecting human ego but are, according to the context, the individual judgments of the conscience. These thoughts, as it were, strive and dispute with one another. They accuse or defend one another. The object of the accusation or defense is, of course, man in whom these thoughts arise.

This reminds one of a lawsuit. It takes place in man's inner self. The Judge is God. Before His tribunal stands man. Witnesses, accusers, counsel are the conscience and the judgments of the conscience. The norm of judgment is the law written in man's heart. As often as man deals contrary to this norm, he is accused by his own thoughts and conscience, or defended by them if his deeds conform to that norm. In this manner, by applying the law to all actions of man, the conscience proves the existence of the inner law.

Today, natural law is defined by many as "moral ability." However, natural law is something altogether different than man's moral quality or conduct. Natural law is demand, norm. And if the norm is good, it does not follow that the man, to whom this norm is given, is good, that man's inner and outward moral conduct conforms to this norm. Furthermore, conscience judges man's con-

duct. If now the judgments of the conscience are right, it does not follow that man agrees with such judgments and desires what is right. Conscience does not work but only judges works. Just among atrocious scoundrels, who maliciously transgress and oppose God's will with all energy, conscience often exercises its function to the utmost. In particular, it appears as man's accuser and shows him that he is and does evil. But even if the conscience once excuses man, even if the heathen once do what is demanded by the law, this civil righteousness permits no exception from the general rule: because of Adam's fall human nature and essence are altogether corrupt. Civil righteousness is no true fulfillment of the law, no obedience of the heart, but only an outward work, which is also found where man is barren of all fear and love to God. In no way does civil righteousness make the individual well-pleasing before God.

Verse 16:

In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. That the conscience bears witness that the thoughts accuse or excuse, obviously occurs now already. It appears strange that the apostle refers this inner proceeding to Judgment-day. This procedure of the conscience continues throughout the entire history of humanity, and its result will be brought to bear before the tribunal of the Final Judgment and the final decision made on Judgment-day. The conscience now accuses or excuses man before God, and in the voice of his conscience man already hears God's voice. On that Day, however, God will utter the final word in this affair. The Judge of the world will confirm all those accusations of the thoughts and then execute the judgment, which already their own conscience pronounced upon the evil-doers. He will, however, respect the defense made by the conscience. Nevertheless, the works of civil righteousness will never save man from future wrath, which he has deserved because of his disobedience otherwise. But a man who has lived and dealt honorably will suffer less stripes than another who has wasted his whole life and wilfully shunned all obligations. And the real doers of the law, who obeyed what was written in their hearts and obeyed the demands of God revealed in the Word, will see the witness of their conscience confirmed and receive from God the recognition that men denied them. And so natural law, from which the conscience draws its judgments, is substitution for the written law, as well as a norm of the Final Judgment.

On Judgment-day God will judge "the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." God will judge men according to the Gospel, which the apostle preached, and by Jesus Christ whom his Gospel concerned. That the Lord Himself stated: "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12, 48. That God will judge according to the Gospel does not contradict the apostle's declaration that God will judge and reward according to works. The real decision concerning salvation and damnation God will make according to the Gospel. It will all depend on how a man has regarded the Gospel and Jesus Christ, the Mediator of salvation, whether or not he received the Gospel and salvation in Christ in faith. Concerning this Jesus Christ, the Savior of men, will above all inquire when He, by order of God,

will judge men. The secret of men is the attitude of their heart to the Gospel, to Christ and to God. However, the faith of the heart necessarily expresses and proves itself in good works, in the fulfillment of the law. And so on that Day the Judge will inquire concerning and investigate work and conduct and examine the works of men according to the law, which He wrote in their hearts and revealed in the Word. The Gospel is the norm for the real decision concerning life or death. Law and works, through which He will show the reasons for His decision, are the norm for the public sentence before all the world on Judgment-day.

Severe Guilt of the Jews

17 - 29

Verse 17:

The apostle has come to an understanding with the Gentiles. Now he takes up the Jews. He begins his reprimand with the words: Behold, thou art called a Jew. With vivid speech he singles out one Jew and holds before him what he has to say to all Jews. After the return from the Babylonian Captivity the name "Jew" was applied to all the people of Israel and distinguished from the Gentiles.

The Jew boasted of the advantage he had over the Gentiles. And retest in, thou reliest on, the law, and makest thy boast of God. These were true prerogatives of the Jews. God had revealed Himself and His law to the Jews, while the heathen lived without God in the world. They rested in the outward possession of the law and thought this made them secure before God.

Verse 18:

Further advantages resulted from possession of the law. And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent (rather: and examinest the differences), being instructed out of the law. Since they were instructed from the law, the Jews knew God's will, which regulated all things. They were, therefore, capable of examining the differences, the difference between right and wrong.

Verses 19.20:

This their better knowledge the Jews asserted over against others. They offered their services to the blind, unenlightened heathen as leaders and teachers. And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, of those who lack a true understanding of good and evil, a teacher of babes, of those incapable of passing judgment, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

In the revealed law the Jews possessed the right form of knowledge and of truth. The Jews had the full and adequate expression of divine will in the Mosaic law, while the natural law, written also in the hearts of the heathen, was often darkened and perverted by sin. And so the Jews were called to instruct others, the ignorant and impudent heathen, whose foolish heart

was darkened, whose moral concepts of the true God and His good and holy will were confused. Willingly they assumed this role of teacher and educator. Such readiness for and conviction in the office of teaching were conceited self-confidence and arrogance. Truly, a picture of the pharisaically-minded Jew.

Verse 21.

Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? The Jews pretended to teach others, as indeed the possession of the law qualified them. To such pretension, however, their own conduct to the law stood in sharp contrast. Themselves they did not teach. They did not in the least follow what they taught and presented to others as truth.

Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? They preached that man should not steal, but they themselves stole. Their thievery included all injustices and deceits of which they had become guilty in their business transactions.

Verse 22:

Thou sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? They taught that men should not commit adultery, yet committed adultery themselves. Sensuality was one of their glaring vices.

Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? They detested idols and yet committed sacrilege. Many believe this sacrilege was the robbing of heathen temples. Paul, however, is severely criticizing the fundamental moral vices of Judaism and so would hardly have charged a Jew, who had no regard for heathen idols, with sacrilege but at the most with common robbery for robbing heathen temples. This sacrilege is the robbing of the Jewish temple, which was dedicated to the true God. According to Mal. 3, 8-10 it was regarded as sacrilege if Jews withheld from the Lord and His temple the offerings and tithes due. And that was a common offense of the pharisaically-minded Jews, not merely proof of common greed but proof above all that they despised the Lord and His temple. What an inconsistency that was! The Jews abhorred heathen idols, zealously declaimed idolatry, as they pretended, out of holy zeal for the Lord Jehovah and His house; but yet they robbed, desecrated and despised the house of the Lord as a matter of course.

The apostle charges the Jews with the same threefold transgression of the heathen, unchastity, harming of the neighbor, and sacrilege against God. However, their guilt was greater than that of the heathen, even greater than the guilt of those hypocritical judges of morality, because the Jews adorned and covered their godlessness and unrighteousness with God's Word and law. Teaching others God's Word and then doing the exact opposite is worse than judging others concerning things which he himself does.

Verses 23.24:

Concluding this description of morals, the apostle sums up the individual transgressions of the Jews: Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou

God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. Is. 52,5; Ezek. 36, 20-23. You know the will of God and teach others. But yourself you do not teach. You rather transgress the law and shame your God. And what follows? It is evident that you, least of all, will escape God's wrath and judgment. The law, of which you boast and which you so impudently transgress, will serve only to your damnation.

Because of the godless, unholy conduct of the Jews the heathen had reviled the name of God, charging God with the sins of the Jews, as though God himself through His own law had led His people to such objectionable conduct. These words of Paul also concern all hypocrites among the Christians, who boast of their Christian name and the pure teaching of divine Word; but in their daily life thwart the teaching of divine Word by unrighteousness in business and carnal sins of all kinds, by sacrilege, withholding their gifts and offerings, and the like, and thus give unbelievers occasion to mock Christianity and the God of the Christians.

Verse 25:

A Jew who transgresses the law will not escape God's judgment. That sentence remains in force. Circumcision does not alter it. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Circumcision in itself will not save the Jews from wrath. The Jews also boasted of the circumcision and thought no evil would befall them because they were circumcised. A Rabbinical proverb read that every one who was circumcised shared in the future kingdom. But circumcision is only advantageous, Paul reminds the Jew, who is proud of his circumcision, "if thou keep the law."

The significance, the advantage of circumcision was that it made one a member and gave him a right to all the blessings of God's people. However, only then when fulfillment of the law followed circumcision. Circumcision obligated the Jews to obey the law. "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to the whole law." Gal.5,3. If, on the other hand, a Jew transgressed the law, his circumcision benefited him nothing. His circumcision became foreskin. Before God he was a lost and rejected heathen.

Verse 26:

The reverse follows: Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? If an uncircumcised heathen observes all the demands and commands of the law, to him his foreskin will be reckoned as circumcision. Then God will regard him as a member of His congregation.

Verse 27:

And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, the Gentiles uncircumcised and unclean by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? A heathen who fulfills the law condemns the Jew,

who transgresses the law, as guilty and worthy of death. That the Jew disobeys the law, in spite of the fact that he has it written before his eyes and is subjected to it through circumcision, only increases his guilt.

When the apostle speaks of Gentiles, who fulfill the law, that is no abstract possibility but something that often happens. And the Gentile, who judges the Jew, is a real person. To be sure, keeping the righteousness of the law and fulfilling the law describe the true obedience to the law, of which no heathen is capable by nature but which is only found among Christians, who have the Spirit of God. But Paul has in mind just these heathen who have become Christians. The apostle does not here expressly mention how one uncircumcised comes by such obedience, but simply presents the fact that heathen, uncircumcised by nature, without becoming Jews and without being circumcised, nevertheless fulfill the law.

Verses 28.29:

Circumcision has no value in itself. That assertion Paul again justifies. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. One who is a Jew outwardly is not really a Jew, nor is what is done to the flesh really circumcision. Rather: one who is a Jew inwardly is really a Jew, a member of God's people. And the circumcision of the heart in the Spirit, not in the letter, is in reality circumcision and makes man a member of God's congregation. Yes, such a man, who is circumcised in the heart, does not have his praise before men but of God.

Circumcision of the flesh reminded and exhorted the Israelites concerning the circumcision of the heart, that they should cleanse their natural heart from its wild impulses, from disobedience and obstinacy, from evil lusts and desires. "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." Deut. 10,16. Inner circumcision does not come through the letter of the law, that is, by performing on the body what the law demanded, but through the Spirit of God. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart." Deut. 10,6. It is the Spirit of God, who renews, cleanses man's heart and gives him power unto sanctification. Him who is circumcised inwardly, in the heart, who is born anew through the Spirit of God, be he Jew or Gentile, God regards as circumcised and a member of His congregation. Out of the circumcision of the heart then flows true obedience to the law.

Thus the apostle gives the proud Jew to consider that his circumcision is worthless before God and will not help him in judgment if there is no circumcision of the heart and no obedience to the law. That was the sacrament of the Old Testament. But the same is true of Christian baptism. The value and significance of baptism are that it brings man into the Church and makes him a child of God, that it regenerates and renews him through the Holy Ghost, and that it obligates and qualifies him to lead a holy, godly life and conduct. However, baptism will not save from God's wrath him who boasts of his baptism and denies new birth, faith and obedience to God.

Chapter 3

That the Sins of Men Serve to the Glory of God
Does not Cancel Their Guilt
1-8

Verses 1.2.

After what has been said, what advantage then hath the Jew? Circumcision is the advantage, for it makes the Jew a Jew. Or what profit is there of circumcision? The answer: Much every way. The advantage of the Jews over the heathen extends into every phase of life. In 9,1ff. Paul enumerates a number of Jewish prerogatives. Here he is content to mention only the chief advantage.

Chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. These are the declarations, the revelations, of the true, living God. In the Old Testament prophecy as well as God's law are called oracles. Num.24,4; Ps.107,11. In the New Testament the law of Moses, the Gospel of Christ and God's Word are especially called God's oracles. Acts 7,38; Hebr. 5,12; 1 Pet. 4,11. Here oracles embrace all revelations of God, which Israel received and which are laid down in the Old Testament Scriptures, both law and promises but not the New Testament Gospel of salvation. By entrusting His oracles to them, God placed Israel into a special relation to Himself: He was Israel's God, and Israel was His people.

Verse 3:

The apostle maintains the Jews' advantage against a possible objection. For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? This was not their unbelief in the preaching of Christ and the apostles. For in this whole context Paul characterizes Judaism in itself, apart from its attitude towards the Gospel. The unbelief of the Jews and the faith of God describe a conduct of the Jews and a conduct of God respectively, and must be taken in the sense of unfaithfulness and faithfulness.

Verse 4:

Certain Jews, the majority of the Jews, were unfaithful. They did not rightly keep and apply the divine revelations entrusted to them, nor did they believe the promises of God and obey His law. Thus they became faithless and disloyal to God. One might think, therefore, that the unfaithfulness of the Jews destroyed the force of and brought to naught God's faithfulness. But God forbid. That is a false conclusion. God was faithful to the unfaithful also. He did not sever His relationship with Israel when Israel did not believe and obey His words. He did not take away His law and promises. He rather spoke further to the unfaithful, disobedient people through His prophets, continually reminded the apostates of His law, admonished, warned and rebuked them, fascinated and attracted them by His promises until they were fulfilled in Christ.

The unfaithfulness of Israel does not set aside God's faithfulness. Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar. This

should and will be the final result of the affair between God and the Jews: God is the truthful One, since He remained true to His Word; the Jews, however, liars, since they forsook His Word. The truthfulness of God coincides with His faithfulness and the mendacity of man with the unfaithfulness of the Jews.

However, it reads: "But every man a liar." All men are liars. Not only the Jews but the Gentiles also are liars before God. Ps. 116, 11. The heathen were not blessed with the oracles of God, which the Jews had in preference to them. But God did not leave Himself without witness among them. He revealed Himself, His eternal power and Godhead to them in the works of creation and preservation. He made known to all men His demands and wrote His law into their hearts. But they honored Him not as God nor thanked Him. They suppressed the truth in unrighteousness. By their evil works they denied their better moral knowledge. They did not let the goodness of God lead them to repentance. So they are all liars and oppose the truth.

Nevertheless, man's untruthfulness does not set aside God's truthfulness. God continually shows that He is truthful, also to the liars. He continually manifests Himself to sinful, lying men in the sphere of creation and in their conscience. He admonishes, warns and rebukes them. He reveals to them His love and kindness in the blessings of daily life and permits them to experience the riches of His divine goodness, patience and long-suffering. And so the final result of this affair between God and man will be: God is true, but every man is a liar. God did nothing amiss. Men were in want of nothing. God meant it well with man and had dealt justly. But man deceived and disappointed God. The guilt is man's. In view of God's sincerity and truthfulness, the lie, the guilt of man appear all the greater.

Every man will finally stand before God as a liar, no one excepted. Even the believers among the Jews and Gentiles are by nature sinners and liars. The apostle does not consider here that the grace of God in Christ has changed the relation between God and man. Nevertheless, that final result of human history will be confirmed through faith and the grace of Jesus Christ. If God now and on that Day regards and pronounces the believers righteous out of Grace for Christ's sake, He thereby proves that they are sinners and unrighteous. And if believers take refuge in God's grace and desire to be justified and saved through Christ's merits, they show by this that they are sinners and transgressors before God. Gal. 2, 18.

For confirmation of his statement the apostle turns to a word of Scripture, Ps. 51, 4: As it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. This word of the Psalm also puts the final result of the matter and Final Judgment before our eyes. When God on that Day will remonstrate man concerning his conduct, He will carry His point; He will convict man. It will be proved that God did nothing to harm man but was very kind to him; that man, on the other hand, offended God and broke faith with Him. And so God will conquer, appear pure, guiltless and righteous when He pronounces the judicial sentence of merited death and damnation upon man.

That it will happen thus is God's will and design. Sin occurs against God's will and is an abomination before Him. However, if man does what is evil in the eyes of God, it is then His will that man vindicate God by his sin. God does not want evil; but if man does evil, He wills just this effect of evil. The fact that he who sins always sins against and does what is evil before God should and does serve to make God appear the offended Person, against whom an injustice has been committed and who does right when He judges and punishes the sinner.

Verse 5:

But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, etc. Men's conduct to God, before characterized as unfaithfulness and addiction to lies, is called unrighteousness. God's conduct to men, previously placed under the special aspect of faithfulness and truthfulness, is called righteousness. The unrighteousness of men is their abnormal moral condition. God's righteousness is His integrity. He is as He must be, without error. By saying "our unrighteousness" the apostle included himself with all men.

The advantage of the Jews and God's faithfulness show the unfaithfulness of the Jews; the truthfulness of God shows man's addiction to lies. All along the apostle has brought home to the Jews and Gentiles the greatness and severity of their sins, so that they have no excuse and are worthy of punishment. But it is also true that men's unfaithfulness and untruthfulness show God's faithfulness and truthfulness, or their unrighteousness God's righteousness. If light and shadow appear side by side, light makes the shadow appear all the darker; but also vice versa, shadow makes light appear all the brighter. This latter thought is now introduced.

But if it is so - and it really is - that our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God, What shall we say? What is the conclusion? Does this follow: Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? Human reason infers and concludes thus, for the apostle says, I speak as a man. Natural reason infers from the foregoing premises that God is unrighteous. If the unrighteousness of men commends the righteousness of God, then God is unrighteous if He executes His wrath upon men, who by their unrighteousness contribute towards the glorification of His righteousness. God forbid, says the apostle to such an assertion, in

Verse 6:

For then how shall God judge the world? The future judgment of the world utterly excludes the possibility that God could deal unjustly. That God, the Judge of the world, is a righteous Judge is a fixed axiom in Scripture. Gen.18,25: "That be far from thee to do after this manner, ~~to~~ slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" The Judge of the world will certainly not judge unjustly.

Verse 7:

For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my

lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? The apostle again places himself at the end of human history and from there looks into the past. The lie of men has caused the truthfulness of God to manifest itself all the more richly, in that God showed His truthfulness to the liars, His faithfulness to the faithless. So man's lie served to glorify God. If that is so - and it really is - "why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" If by my life I have given God occasion to manifest His truthfulness all the more richly to His glorification, why is it that just I, who glorify God by my sin, will be judged a sinner, that God, nevertheless, reckons to me my sin as guilt and for that reason calls me to account? The reason can only be this: God is and remains holy and righteous. If He were not, then He could not go into judgment with me as a sinner but would rather have to let my sin, which is only to His advantage, go unpunished. The unrighteous is not concerned about good or evil but only about his own advantage. If God brings the sinner to account, He thus loves justice and hates unrighteousness. He cannot endure to leave unpunished him who does evil.

Verse 8:

And not rather, as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that good may come? Paul is speaking of an evil rumor which was and is still current concerning the Christians, himself included. This evil rumor was a misinterpretation and perversion of the teaching of justification, especially of such statements as "the law entered, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rom. 5, 20. From this the unbelieving world shamefully concluded, and still concludes, that Christians intentionally did evil in order that sin-forgiving grace might abound all the more freely, and that the Christians spoke and taught accordingly that one should bravely sin in order to make further room for grace, 6, 1. Or according to the present context, Christians confidently did evil to the glorification of God and His truthfulness, sinned fearlessly to the greater glory of God, and also taught thus.

The apostle protests against this report concerning the Christians. No, it is not so, as the Christians are slandered. Christians rather repudiate that Jesuitic theory and practice ascribed them. They avoid and shun evil, though they know that it finally redounds to the glory of God, and teach that evil should be avoided. In the name of all Christians and in holy wrath the apostle pronounces the anathema upon that Jesuitic moral and declares that the damnation of such people who sin to the greater glory of God is entirely just. Whose damnation is just.

Why is it not so, as it is slanderously reported of us? Why is it that Christians in teaching and practice conduct themselves altogether differently towards sin as it is reported of them? Christians well know and feel what an abominable thing sin really is. They realize that sin under all circumstances, though it must finally serve to God's glory, implies severe guilt and brings down upon them God's righteous wrath. By avoiding evil Christians acknowledge that their God is a holy and righteous God.

These last words of the apostle contain an apology of divine righteousness and a rejection of the false conclusion that God is unrighteous when He executes His wrath.

God is righteous in His judgment. Before God man is a sinner and guilty. Neither through the one fact, that God's faithfulness and truthfulness are manifested to the faithless and liars, nor through the other, that man's unrighteousness glorifies God's righteousness, are man's moral responsibility and the guilt of sin lessened or cancelled. The apostle takes away all excuse from sinful man. In no respect is it a merit or work of man; it is not the natural effect of sin that it serves to the glory of God; but it is God's wonderful regulation that He, from what is in itself only evil and has only evil results, brings forth something good.

Scripture and Universal Guilt 9 - 20

Verse 9:

What then? What is the situation after what has been said? Are we, namely we Jews, in whose name the apostle speaks, better than they, the Gentiles? No, in no wise. We Jews by no means excel the heathen, are no better than they. That objective advantage of the Jews, 3,1ff., which continues in spite of their unfaithfulness, includes no subjective advantage or benefit for the faithless.

For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. Previously the apostle had pointed out that the heathen, 1, 18ff., and also the Jews, 2,17ff., that all men without exception, are under sin. To be under sin does not have the same meaning as to be sinners, to sin. The expression refers not to the conduct of men but to the situation in which they find themselves. Nor is it meant that Jew and Greek alike are enslaved under sin. Paul simply refers to the decline of mankind into guilt. All men have sin as guilt, have the guilt of sin upon them. God reckons their sins to their account. They are guilty before God, subject to punishment. To be sure, this being guilty, being under sin, supposes and implies that he who is under sin and guilty is himself a sinner and has sinned. Only one who is a sinner and has committed sin is regarded by God as a sinner and held responsible for his sin.

Verse 10:

As it is written. Paul introduces Scriptural proof. Everything he speaks and writes is positive truth. What he speaks and writes as apostle is God's Word. Nevertheless, he supports his own authority by another and confirms the guilt which he has raised against Jews and Gentiles by the testimony of the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament. So the Scriptural teaching of the complete and basic corruption and damnable nature of the human race is corroborated by two reliable, infallible witnesses.

The first Scriptural citation is the beginning of Ps. 14, which describes the universality of human corruption. Ps. 14, 1-3, Paul only takes from this passage what directly serves his purpose, to set forth the universality of guilt.

Verse 11: There is none righteous, no, not one. He continues according to the sense of the Psalmist: There is none that understandeth, no one who will listen to God. There is none that seeketh after God, no one who asks or bothers himself about God. Here the Psalmist and with him the apostle lead the general moral corruption back to its root: man's inner estrangement from and enmity to God. And at the close it reads: Verse 12: They are all gone out of the way, they together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one, not even a single one, including the one.

The following citations state how human corruption reveals itself in the conversation, vv. 13.14, and in the activities of men, vv. 15-17.

Verse 13.14:

Their throat is an open sepulchre. Their throat exhales death. With their tongues they have used deceit. Ps. 5, 9. They make their tongues smooth; they flatter the simple in order to draw them all the more easily into their trap. From Ps. 140, 3: The poison of asps is under their lips. The poison of asps is a picture of cunning perniciousness. From Ps. 10, 7 in verse 14: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, hatefulness, deceit. The different organs of speech, throat, tongue, lips, mouth, are in the service of unrighteousness, to the ruin of the neighbor.

Verse 15. 16.17.18:

The following verses are a shortened reproduction of Is. 59, 7.8. Their feet are swift to shed blood. They hurry to shed blood because they have so much joy in it. Everything by which one harms his neighbor in body and life is, according to Scriptures and God's judgment, murder, killing, shedding of blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways, verse 16. On their way through life they leave behind them the crushed and the miserable, the unfortunates whom they themselves have trampled under foot and made unfortunate. Every one pursues his own interests inconsiderately and tramples under foot all those who stand in his way. And the way of peace have they not known, verse 17. They have not learned to know peace. A way upon which they could spread abroad peace, salvation, blessing, has remained foreign to them. They are accustomed only to do evil. The apostle concludes with Ps. 36, 1: There is no fear of God before their eyes, verse 18. They have no dread of God, which could restrain them from doing evil.

It is to be noted that the passages from the Psalms, with the exception of Ps. 14, 1-3, speak of the godless in distinction from the righteous, and that Is. 59, 7.8 is concerned with apostate Israel. However, the godless are the men of this world; among them universal human corruption had brought forth

its full, ripe fruit. And apostate Israel had become just like the heathen the sinners of this world. Even the righteous in this life have not completely put off the universal human nature.

In his description of morals the apostle does not have before his eyes the wild barbarian hordes, but above all, the civilized world of his time. Even the much praised culture and humanity of our days do not make men any better and nobler than they are described here. It is verily a horrible picture of night which the apostle sketches, but it is a picture of mankind in accordance with the truth. So Scripture describes fallen man. Yes, of that man who went out from God's creative hand adorned with His own image only a caricature remains.

Verse 19:

The apostle yet adds a remark concerning the law and the people under the law. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law. Everything the revealed, Mosaic law says and demands it speaks to those who are under the law, to the Jews, whose entire life to the minutest detail was regulated by the law. However, the purpose of the law and of instruction in the law is that every mouth may be stopped, that no one may advance anything to his justification, and all the world may become guilty before God. The law should aid in arriving at this result. That the heathen are guilty before God and deserve punishment because of their glaring abominations is evident. But the Jews, whose vices were hidden by a certain outward righteousness or appearance of piety, are no better than the heathen. The law, which they had in preference to the heathen, serves to silence them also before God when He judges them and to make them appear worthy of punishment. And so it amounts to this that every mouth is stopped, that the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, deserves punishment.

Verse 20:

The law has just this effect upon those who are under the law and not, as one might expect, of aiding man to righteousness. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. Works of the law are the works which the law demands. Never will it occur that a man will be righteous before God as a result of the works of the law. And why not? For by the law is the knowledge of sin. The law leads those who hear it to the knowledge that they have not done and cannot do what the law demands. So by the law men are convicted of transgressing the law, of their guilt and of their deserving punishment.

Justification by Faith 21-31

The apostle returns to the main theme of the letter: the righteousness which avails before God. It is this theme that his discussion concerning universal depravity served. For only one who rightly knows sin understands the righteousness revealed in the Gospel. Only one who rightly feels and experiences his wrong, his unworthiness, treasures the great blessing of the New Testament, the grace of God in Christ.

Verse 21:

The apostle begins his discourse from anew and calls to his readers as with a raised voice: But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. Paul does not contrast the Christian era to the pre-Christian era, nor only the revelation of the Gospel to that of the law, but rather the Christian estate to the non-Christian.

The apostle had previously shown that all men, Jews and Gentiles, were under sin, that the whole world was guilty before God and deserved punishment. And at the present time that is still the condition of things outside the pale of the Gospel. Now however, in Christ, in the Gospel, a righteousness has appeared that throws an altogether different light upon men's position to God, that gives the world a new appearance.

What sort of righteousness is it the apostle praises and recommends to his readers? What does the phrase "righteousness of God" say? By no means are we permitted to think of righteousness as an attribute of God nor in the sense of truthfulness or goodness. It was before described as something revealed and offered to men in the Gospel. Thus it is a gift of God to man. The discussion is rather concerning the fact and the how of man's justification. And the question to be answered is whether with this righteousness is meant a moral conduct of men or a moral relation of man to God. In addition to righteousness of God there are other similar expressions in the following verses. Verse 24: "Being justified freely." Verse 26: God the "justifier." Verse 30: God "shall justify." Therefore, if we wish to establish what is meant by "righteousness of God," we must first ascertain what "to justify," said of God, and "to be justified," said of men, mean. MB

"To justify" is thought of as a deed, whose object is as a result righteous or just. This being righteous or just can well be according to the judicial judgment of God. "To justify" would mean, therefore, to pronounce righteous. Justifying or making righteous can also be a declarative act, to effect that one is righteous according to the judgment and opinion of God - "to declare righteous," "to regard as righteous."

What the actual meaning of "to justify" is, whether it designates a moral transformation or a declaring righteous, or both, that only the usage of language can decide. And the combined testimony of profane and Biblical Greek, both of the Old and of the New Testament, indicates that the expression "to justify" is a judgment - pronouncing righteous, absolving. (see Cremer's *Woerterbuch der Neutestamentlichen Graecitaet*) Therefore "to justify" is a forensic concept.

Analogous to the expression "to declare righteous," "righteousness of God" points to man's position or relation to God, designates the relation of being righteous in which man is placed by God's act of declaring righteous. Therefore, "righteousness of God" is the imputed righteousness, the righteousness which avails before God.

This righteousness of God, that counteracts sin, guilt and wrath, is truly not our own righteousness, not something good in us, but a righteousness that rests outside of us in God, in God's judgment, and so is as firm and immovable as God Himself. What God says, judges, decrees, is valid in time and in eternity. He whom God declares righteous is righteous, even though all the world and all devils condemn him, even though his own conscience pronounces him guilty and judges him.

Concerning this righteousness it is said that it is revealed, namely, in and with the preaching of the Gospel. This is an accomplished fact, that continues, however, as long as the Gospel, which came into the world at that time, is preached. However, what is revealed existed before, even though in a hidden manner. Only an existing thing is revealed. The righteousness existed in the eyes of God when and before it was revealed. God's judgment, which declares the sinner just, has long been passed and settled and is now made known to sinners through the Gospel. Jesus Christ established the New Testament righteousness. And this gift is offered to men in the preaching of the Gospel. God's economy of salvation, according to the Lord's declaration, Luke 24, 46, 47, embracing two things: first, Christ must suffer and rise from the dead, the forgiveness of sins being won thereby; and then, in the name of Jesus the existing forgiveness should be made known and imparted to all people through preaching. This is also Paul's meaning, for the righteousness, of which he speaks, is identical with the forgiveness of sins.

"Without the law" this righteousness is and is revealed. The law does not speak in the Gospel. God demands nothing of man in the preaching of the Gospel but only promises, gives and presents, namely, the New Testament blessing of righteousness.

For the sinful and apostate world this preaching is altogether new tidings and wisdom. Nevertheless, in some measure it was already known to God's people of the Old Testament. It is the age-old truth. The righteousness, of which the apostles speak and write, is witnessed by the law and the prophets, by the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Luke 24, 47; Acts 28, 23. The apostle does not merely refer to such passages of the Old Testament which mention that righteousness, as Gen. 15, 6; Hab. 2, 4, but especially to the prophecy of the Old Covenant concerning Christ and salvation in Christ. Salvation in Christ is essentially nothing else than the righteousness which avails before God.

Verse 22:

Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. This righteousness is the righteousness of faith. But what is the relation of faith to righteousness? According to the apostle the righteousness which avails before God existed before it was revealed, before preaching and faith. The preaching of the Gospel, which reveals and offers this righteousness, renders possible and first awakens faith. So the meaning can only be that the righteousness before God becomes ours, is received and appropriated, through faith.

In justification faith is merely the medium of accepting. For faith is trust, confidence in God's salvation, a confident acceptance of the grace of salvation. With full confidence faith takes, grasps, and lays hold of that Jesus Christ, of whom the Gospel speaks and in whom exists the righteousness which avails before God. By accepting the Gospel, man appropriates to himself Christ and the righteousness which Christ prepared, which is revealed and offered to him in the Gospel. Through faith the individual draws to his own person God's judgment of justification, so that this judgment, this righteousness which avails before God, is his own personal possession. And just this is God's design. This also belongs into the economy of salvation that man applies to himself, rejoices and takes comfort in this perfect righteousness, which God has wrought for sinners through Christ. The righteousness of God is there, exists, is intended for all who believe. He who only believes, whoever he may be, who only takes what God offers, shares in this great blessing of the New Testament.

Verse 23:

For there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. The persons spoken of are they that believe. Therefore, all who believe have, before they became believers, sinned and so fallen short of the glory of God. This glory of God is not the future glorification of God, in which the believers will finally share, or the original image of God which man had. All who believe have sinned and are, therefore, without all glory, all honor, all esteem before God, since all without exception become righteous in this way: that they in the knowledge of their sinfulness and complete unworthiness before lay hold of Jesus Christ in faith. Through faith they appropriate to themselves in and with Christ that perfect righteousness which avails before God and offered them in the Gospel. Thus they have righteousness and are righteous and good before God.

Verse 24:

Paul proceeds to discuss justification at some length. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. We are justified in the form of a gift, gratuitously. We have in no wise earned justification for ourselves. We are justified by His grace, in or by virtue of His grace. The grace of God is His favor and kindness towards sinners. We owe our justification to God alone, exclusively to His free grace, in no respect to ourselves or to our deeds. The grace of God is the motive of our justification. The means of justification is the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. According to His gracious disposition God sent Christ Jesus as the Redeemer of the world and made Him a propitiation for sin in order thus to justify sinners.

The righteousness which avails before God becomes our's through faith in Jesus Christ. How is He concerned in our justification? Jesus Christ redeemed sinners. Whereof? That is ascertained from the context. There the apostle indicated that all men, Jews and Gentiles, are under sin and sinners, that they are guilty before God and deserve punishment and have nothing else to expect than God's wrath. Therefore, from sin, guilt, punishment Christ has redeemed, has ransomed us.

Christ redeemed us from all our sins and from God's wrath by paying a price, a ransom. That Christ Himself stated: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Matt. 20, 28. "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. 2, 6. By payment of a ransom men were wont to ransom prisoners of war or slaves from captivity or slavery. So Christ by paying a high price ransomed sinful men, held in bondage because of their guilt.

And what is this price, this ransom? It is He Himself, His own life, His own blood. In Christ we have redemption through His blood. Because of their abominations men are worthy of death, have forfeited their lives. However, Christ came and in their stead pledged His own life and shed His own blood for them. Thus sinful men become free from sin, death and damnation. Christ Jesus is the Son of God. And the life, the blood of the Son of God, yes, God's blood, God's martyrdom, God's death - that is indeed the payment and ransom for the whole world. That Paul says redemption "is" in Christ Jesus, was not merely brought about by Him, points to the permanent result, the lasting power and effect of His redemption.

Verse 25:

The redemptive work of Christ is discussed from another angle. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. Propitiation, in the original Hebrew "Kapporeth," is taken from the sacrificial ritual of Israel. Kapporeth was the name of the golden cover over the Ark of the Covenant, therefore, the mercy-seat. Thus Christ is compared to and appears as the Antitype of the Old Testament mercy-seat.

The atoning power and efficacy of the mercy-seat rested in the blood of a sacrificial animal with which it was sprinkled every year. The significance of the Old Testament offering was the following. If an Israelite had sinned against a commandment of God, according to the precepts of the law he took an animal from his herd without fault or blemish and brought it to the tabernacle, later to the temple. In the court of the sanctuary he laid his hand upon the animal's head. Thus he substituted the animal for himself and symbolically transferred to it his sins and guilt. Lev. 16, 21. Thereupon the Israelite killed the animal for offering. By his sin the Israelite had forfeited his life and merited death. However, in his stead the guiltless life of an animal was given into death and its blood shed. The animal, to which the sins of the Israelite were imputed, atoned for the punishment of the sinner.

First then did the functioning priest take part in the sacrificial act. He took the blood of the animal and spread it on the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, or waved it to and fro on the side wall of the altar, or poured it out on the ground around the altar, thereby bringing it into the presence of God. For the altar was the place where God came together with His people. Ex. 29, 42. The blood of the animal came between the sinner and the holy God and so covered or atoned for man's sin. The

blood-offering, applied to the altar of God, covered the sins of the sinner before God, so that God no longer saw his sins, no longer regarded them, no longer reckoned them to his account. The blood served as atonement for sins, while in and with the blood the life, the soul, of the animal gushed forth, and thereby the punishment of the sins was atoned. Lev. 17,11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." The blood of the animal did not in itself have the power to atone for sins, but only inasmuch as it prophesied of the better Offering of the New Testament. The basic idea of the offering, therefore, was vicarious satisfaction.

The significance of the offering is the foundation for the right understanding of the sprinkling of blood by the high priests upon the Ark of the Covenant on the great Day of Atonement. The sacrificial act of this day, culminating in the sprinkling of blood, was the Old Testament's highest and most perfect act of atonement. On this day all the sins of Israel during the past year were atoned. Lev. 16,30: "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord."

The essential characteristics of this great act of atonement are the following. The high priest took a young bullock as sin-offering for himself and for the priesthood and two he-goats as sin-offering for the people and placed them before the Lord, before the door of the tabernacle, later before the door of the temple. Hereupon he slew the bullock of the sin-offering for himself and the priesthood. Then he filled the pastil burners with coals from the altar of burnt-offering and his hands with holy frankincense; and carrying both into the holy of holies, he caused a cloud of smoke to arise by laying the frankincense upon the burning coals. Thus the mercy-seat over the Ark, the place of God's presence, was covered so that he could safely approach it. While the holy of holies became filled with smoke of the incense, the high priest returned to the court for the blood of the bullock. Reentering the holy of holies for the second time, he sprinkled first the front side of the Ark's covering, then seven times on the ground before the Ark. By this act he atoned for his own sins and for those of the priesthood. The sprinkling upon the Ark served as atonement for the persons of the high priest and priests, the sprinkling before the Ark as atonement and cleansing of the holy of holies, which became unclean through the sins of the priesthood.

After the atonement of the priesthood was completed, the high priest left the sanctuary for the second time, returned to the court, and there killed the ram, selected by lot as sin-offering for the congregation. With its blood he went into the holy of holies for the third time and sprinkled the blood in the same manner as before. The significance of the double sprinkling of blood was identical in both instances. The sins of the congregation and then the impurity of the holy of holies resulting from these sins were atoned. In similar ways, by means of blood, the holy place and the court, especially the altar of burnt-offering,

were cleansed from all impurity of the children of Israel. And so the service which the congregation provided through the priesthood in and at the sanctuary was a divine, God-pleasing service.

The most characteristic thing at the offering of the Day of Atonement was that the blood of atonement was brought into the holy of holies and sprinkled upon the covering of the Ark or the mercy-seat. The vessels of the holy of holies formed the throne of the God of Israel. The Ark of the Covenant, wherein was concealed both tables of the law, was the base, the golden plate over the Ark the footstool of the throne. On this plate stood two golden cherubims, whose wings spread over it. Between the cherubims, over their outstretched wings, moved the cloud, that is, the cloud of divine glory, in which Jehovah manifested His presence in the holy of holies over the Ark of the Covenant. Ex. 40,34; 25,22; Lev. 16,2. By applying the blood of the offering to the Kapporeth, the priest brought it into the immediate presence of God. Thus the blood of atonement was really and truly valid before God. The tables of the law in the Ark rebuked the Israelites concerning their sins and transgressions and accused them before God. However, between the tables of the law in the Ark and the holy God, enthroned over the cherubims, was the mercy-seat, sprinkled with blood. The mercy-seat, sprinkled with blood, covered the tables of the law, covered the transgressions of Israel before the eyes of God, so that God no longer saw and regarded them. The mercy-seat with its blood, however, changed God's wrath over sin into grace and good-pleasure. Accordingly, the thought of atonement and reconciliation found its strongest and most concrete expression in the offering of the Great Day of Atonement.

What happened to the second he-goat or the scapegoat was to symbolize through an outward act how God now considered all the sins and impurities of Israel of the past year. To this end the high priest placed both his hands upon the head of the live goat, confessed all the sins and transgressions of Israel, thus putting them upon the head of the goat. Thereupon the goat was led far out into the wilderness and left there in order to show the people that they were completely and forever free from their sins. To be sure, the atonement occurred with the application of the blood of the first goat. But since it was physically impossible to use the dead goat, therefore, another goat had to take its place in order to symbolize to the people how they were released from their sins as a result of the atonement. In this respect both goats formed the one act of atonement.

Christ appears as the Antitype of the Old Testament Kapporeth and as the Counterpart of the Old Testament offering. For He is a "propitiation in his blood," by virtue of His blood. In one person He is the Offering as well as the Priest and the Mercy-seat. Christ Jesus stepped into the sinner's place and took upon Himself the guilt of the whole world. Men did not offer this substitution for themselves, for they continued and delighted in their sins. They desired no Redeemer, no offering for their sins. Unasked, of His own accord and out of free grace, God ordained and gave His Son to men as their Mediator and Atoner. God made Christ a propitiation. The Lord put all our sins upon Him and

imputed them to Him. Is. 53,6. God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin. 2 Cor. 5,21. And Christ of His free will took our sins upon Himself. Is. 53,4; 1 Pet. 2,24. And thus He offered Himself for us.

He is at one and the same time Offering and Priest. He gave His life into death; He shed His own blood in the stead of sinful men, who were worthy of death. With His holy, precious blood He appeared before God Himself. He is our Mediator in the highest throne. He pleaded His blood before God and once and for all atoned for the sins and the guilt of the whole world. He turned God's wrath into pleasure. Marked and covered with His own blood, He stands as the New Testament Kapporeth between sinful men, the transgressors, and the great, holy God and covers all our sins, guilt, shame and weakness before God, so that He no longer reckons them to our account. Therefore, men are completely and forever free from their sins, rid of all their transgressions and impurities. That is what propitiation in His blood includes.

Christ is a "propitiation through faith." His atonement is perfect and needs only to be accepted in faith. Faith it is that applies to itself, that claims for its own, Christ's atonement and redemption and the righteousness which avails before God offered through it. The distressed sinner takes refuge in Christ through faith and there finds protection from God's wrath and judgment.

The nearest object of faith is the Word. God set forth His Son, Jesus Christ, whom He made to be sin and the Atoner for sin, openly before the eyes of the whole sinful world through the preaching of the Gospel. In the Gospel the crucified Christ is set forth before the eyes of men. Gal. 3,1. Sinners hear the Gospel of Christ, of His blood and death; and by believing the Gospel they accept Christ and partake of His atonement and redemption and the righteousness which avails before God. They thus become righteous before God.

God set forth His Son as a propitiation in order to declare his righteousness. By inflicting a violent death upon His Son, by shedding Christ's blood for the atonement of sins, God wanted to manifest His righteousness; and by presenting Christ in His blood and wounds before the eyes of men, to set forth His righteousness before the whole world. This righteousness, however, is not the righteousness which avails before God, but an essential attribute of God. It is the righteousness of God by which He rewards every one according to his works and which shows itself over against the transgressors of the law as punitive righteousness.

In and with Christ's death God wanted to demonstrate His righteousness, because He so far had overlooked men's sins, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. Because of His forbearance God had overlooked and let go by unpunished the sins of the Jews and Gentiles in the time before Christ. The patience of God is not His grace. His patience defers punishment, while His grace completely suspends it. God's wrath, which often broke out upon the Jews and Gentiles in the time

before Christ, was no adequate reward counterbalancing sin. Even though death, the wages of sin, ruled from Adam to Christ, it was, nevertheless, a proportionate impunity and a testimony of God's patience, that sinful men, before they died, lived years, centuries safely and gayly in their sins. Because the sins of men remained unpunished so long, because the righteousness of God demanded punishment for sin, God finally in Christ, in and with His death, solemnly made known His righteousness. And He had formerly overlooked sin to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, verse 26. By letting sin go unpunished before Christ, God had in mind just this demonstration of His righteousness in the New Testament era.

By His bloody offering Christ satisfied God's righteousness. Divine righteousness demanded punishment. And in Christ the sins of all men, of all generations until the end of the world, are punished. The punishment of sin is death and damnation. And Christ died the death of sinners. He died a violent death, shedding His blood on the cross amid horrible pangs and tortures. In this death raged God's wrath. Christ stood in the judgment of sinners. Thus did He render perfect satisfaction for divine righteousness. Men need not die and be damned because of their sins, for Christ, the eternal Son of God, has paid sin's punishment by His innocent, bitter suffering and death and exhausted wrath and judgment. Men are now free from sin, guilt, punishment, from wrath and judgment.

In these verses the apostle has stated that God's grace was the reason for justification and redemption and that divine righteousness was revealed in Christ's suffering and death. It is wrong to coordinate divine grace and righteousness so as to ascribe justification and redemption partly to grace and partly to righteousness as the motive in God. No, what moved God to redeem sinners was exclusively His free grace.

It is foolish speculation if one deduces the redemption of sinners from the essence and attributes of God and thus also from His righteousness. The redemption of sinners was in no respect an act of necessity, neither on the part of man nor on the part of God. If God without further ceremony had damned sinful mankind and not considered its redemption and salvation, He would have remained, as He was and is, the great, holy, just, good and perfect God, and would thereby not have denied His love. God let His creatures experience His love to the utmost. But men despised His love. They neither honored their gracious Creator as God nor thanked Him, and so deserved death.

It was an altogether free impulse of divine love, which we call grace, that moved God to redeem lost mankind. But surely since God planned and carried out the work of redemption and salvation, He did not deny His righteousness. He could not, for He would have denied Himself. He rather yielded completely to His righteousness and just wrath. That Christ, men's substitute, who took men's sins upon Himself, had to give His life and blood was a demonstration of divine righteousness. Where sin, there also punishment, even though the sin lay on Christ.

On the other hand, that Christ substituted for men and took upon Himself all the sins, guilt, punishment and the death and judgment of sinners, that God placed upon Him all sins and their results in order to redeem men, was freely and act of divine grace. The natural course of divine righteousness would have been to let the sinner himself suffer the punishment deserved. However, God's grace intervened and took righteousness into its service, directed it so that in all its force it fell upon the holy Son of God. Therefore sinners need no longer fear divine righteousness, and in life and death can take comfort from this fact that the holy God holds nothing against them.

God set forth Christ to be a propitiation that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. God wanted to be just; therefore, He punished sin in Christ. God wanted to be the Justifier of sinners; therefore, He redeemed sinners through Christ's death and blood, through the punishment executed upon Christ.

And once more Paul mentions that it is faith which applies Christ's redemption and the resulting justification. Believers, who in faith make Jesus and the righteousness which avails before God their own, are finally the righteous, those whom God regards righteous. He who does not believe but rejects Jesus and the judgment of justification, pronounced by God in Christ upon all sinners, is guilty before God and remains under His wrath.

Verse 27:

Where is boasting then? By nature all men have a proud heart and the inclination to glory in themselves and in their own accomplishments. All such boasting is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Law here has the sense of rule or regulation. The law, this regulation of God, tells man what he should and should not do, demands works. And so man's boasting is not altogether excluded by the law. Even if it should according to God's intention lead man to the knowledge that he has not done those works demanded by God and consequently make all the world guilty before God, there still is occasion for carnally-minded man to boast of work-righteousness.

On the other hand, by the other regulation of God, by the law of faith, boasting is altogether excluded. The law of faith is the way to salvation, presented in the Gospel and involving faith. The Gospel tells man of faith but does not demand it as the law demands works. According to this rule man has only to believe and accept what God proclaims, promises, gives, imparts. Faith is not an accomplishment, as are works of the law, but the renunciation of one's own deeds, gain or merit. Confidence and trust in the divine grace in Christ or in Christ Himself - that is faith. And so faith excludes all boasting. It would cease to be faith if it boasted of itself before God concerning any deed.

Verse 28:

Therefore, since boasting is excluded, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Faith

is the means of justification. The object of faith is the grace of God, the redemption in Christ Jesus, the atonement of sins through Christ's blood, the righteousness which avails before God. Upon that faith relies. Since man in faith applies to himself God's grace, Christ's merit, the perfect righteousness won by Christ, he becomes according to God's judgment just, good, perfect, as God wants him to be. And since faith boasts before God of nothing else but of the free, unmerited grace of God, of Christ's merit, all self-praise of man is excluded.

Man is justified without the works of the law. Works of the law do not in the least induce God to pronounce a favorable judgment upon the sinner. Works do not come into consideration before God when He justifies sinners. Therefore, man is justified alone by faith. Man is justified either by faith or by works. But works are altogether excluded. Therefore, faith only remains. Thus the text really says that man is justified "alone by faith."

It would not be amiss to consider what is really meant by works of the law. They are all works which God has prescribed in the law, above all, the works of the Ten Commandments, of the moral law. These works are excluded from the article of justification and salvation, and not only outward works and deeds. Many say that the mere outward work does not avail before God for He looks at the heart. And it is the disposition of the heart which gives man and his works the right value before God. As though God takes the good will for the deed when He justifies man. That is a gross distortion of the simple words of Scripture. To works of the law belongs everything God demands of men in His law, not only the works of the second table but also the works of the first table. That man fears, loves, and trusts, praises and thanks God comes under the rubric "works of the law." And also these works, which concern the right worship of God, these inner works, motives and resolutions of the heart, do not aid in obtaining the righteousness which avails before God. Why man cannot possibly be justified by the works of the law, the apostle previously pointed out when he showed that Jews and Gentiles are sinners.

The works of men are evil and cannot please God. Man does not and cannot do what God demands of him in the law. The apparently good works of the children of this world are an abomination before God, for they proceed from hearts estranged from and hostile to God. Even the truly good works of the converted, which Christians perform in the power of God's Spirit, are weak, defective and imperfect and do not satisfy God. God demands perfect righteousness. Apart from this, Christians daily sin much. And the good they do cannot possibly counterbalance what evil they have done. Yes, God looks at the heart. But also from the hearts of Christians continually proceed wicked thoughts, of which they must be ashamed before God.

So man's works and conduct will never bring about his justification before God. "For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Gal. 2, 16. Therefore, according to God's way of salvation each and every work of the law, outward and inner, the natural works of unconverted man, as well as the spiritual works of the converted, are excluded from the judgment which God pronounces upon men.

In this manner the apostle excludes each and every human deed and conduct from justification. All that man thinks, desires and does, no matter what it is, is excluded. Even faith itself as the source and driving power of good works. It is a radical distortion of the teaching of justification to hold that God, when He justifies man, already sees in faith, the seed the full fruit. Not faith as an act of the human will, not the act of apprehending, but the thing which faith apprehends justifies man. What induces God to declare man just is alone what faith accepts, namely, the merits of Christ.

Therefore, if we wish to stand before God in time and in eternity, if we wish to be justified and saved, we must put far from our eyes all works, also the best works, all our own thoughts, feelings, desires, deeds and efforts, no matter whether they are the best Christian virtues. We are lost if we reflect upon what we have done.

Verses 29.30:

We hold, therefore, that man is justified by faith, without the works of the law. For the apostle adds: Is he the God of the Jews only? This question introduces another assumption which would have to be allowed if the general rule were not quite true. But Paul emphatically rejects this assumption. Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. God is also the God, the Creator, Lord and Judge of the heathen, seeing it is one God. From the unity of God the apostle concludes: Which shall justify the circumcision by faith and uncircumcision through faith. If God is only one, one God for all men, for Jews and Gentiles, it follows that He justifies all men, Jews and Gentiles, in one way, namely, by faith. When a sinner accepts Christ in faith, God regards him just, because he in and with Christ has accepted the righteousness which avails before God. By faith and through faith simply stress that man is justified by faith alone. And this faith is still the same justifying and saving faith in Christ.

With extraordinary liveliness Paul sets before his opponent the universality of salvation and the identical way of salvation for Jews and Gentiles. The apostle is so certain of victory that he regards exhaustive proof unnecessary. And it is with such seemingly elementary statements that the certainty of this truth is made all the more absolute. One God, one Mediator, one salvation and one way of salvation for wicked humanity. That is Pauline preaching. That is Christianity itself.

Verse 31:

The apostle yet raises the question: Do we then make void the law through Faith? Do we make the law, which is God's Word and regulation, of no account, in that we wish to be justified alone by faith, without the works of the law? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. He reserves for later to point out how new obedience of necessity proceeds from faith.

Chapter 4

Abraham, an Example of Faith

1 - 25

Verse 1:

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? That man is justified without the works of the law but by faith alone calls forth the question how it stood with father Abraham in this respect. What did he receive according to the flesh?

By calling Abraham "our father," the apostle associates himself with his Jewish-Christian readers, with his fellow countrymen, and points to the natural descent of Israel from Abraham. The Jews boasted of their father Abraham, and rightly so. Of the spiritual fatherhood of Abraham the apostle first speaks in verse 11. So what he says of father Abraham in verse 1 is taken very generally. One expects fuller particulars as to what he really means by the question: What hath Abraham found as pertaining to the flesh? And he gives us this information in the following.

What Abraham received was justification, the righteousness which avails before God. And now the apostle asks whether he received this great blessing according to the flesh, by works. Flesh is not the human nature corrupted by sin but human nature in general. If one receives something by works, he receives it according to the flesh, in a human way, through his own deeds and efforts. The apostle also thinks of the good works that Abraham did after he was converted, after he became a servant of the living God, of all his glorious virtues for which Scriptures praise father Abraham. The works of the converted, though done in the power of God, are still the deeds of man. All the beautiful Christian virtues are human virtues and the finery and flourish of human nature. The question, therefore, is whether Abraham received righteousness as a result of his good works.

Verse 2:

For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory. If Abraham was really justified as a result of his works, he had reason to boast for having received something great through his own deeds. And indeed he could then have boasted of this before God. But that was not the case. But not before God had Abraham whereof to glory. Abraham was not justified by works according to God's judgment concerning the nature and manner of his justification.

Verse 3:

For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Scriptures testify of Abraham that he was justified by faith, by no other way, therefore not by works. In the testimony of Scripture, which is God's Word, is submitted God's judgment concerning Abraham. Therefore, according to Scripture, according to God's judgment, Abraham was not justified as a result of his works and so has no boast before God.

Thus the apostle has come to the point he is making: Father Abraham was justified before God in that way, in which sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, are justified before God; father Abraham was justified without the works of the law, alone by faith. Paul now wishes to present Abraham as an example of justification by faith.

The Scriptural citation is Gen.15,6, the classic passage of the Old Testament for the teaching of justification. The Lord had again appeared to Abraham and shown him the countless hosts of heaven and told him, "Thus shall your seed be." That was an almost unbelievable promise, for at the time Abraham had no natural son and heir. But Abraham believed God. He firmly relied on and trusted in the Lord, who had given him such a great promise. And this faith the Lord counted unto him for righteousness.

"And it was counted unto him for righteousness." This characterizes justification as a forensic act, as a judgment of God. "To count unto" means to set to one's account, to impute. Therefore, the righteousness which avails before God in life and in death is not a righteousness inherent in us, but a righteousness found outside of man, in the heart of God. What justifies man is that divine majesty considers him justified, considers his sins forgiven. Faith, something else than righteousness, was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness and Abraham was justified by faith, both mean the same.

That God counted Abraham's faith for righteousness was no arbitrary act. In what respect, however, was faith reckoned to Abraham for righteousness? Many find the basis for this in the moral quality of Abraham's faith. This God-pleasing disposition his inner trust in God, they think God took as perfect fulfillment of the law. It is thought that with regard to its nature, but not according to its content, Abraham's faith was like the faith of the Christians. However, if faith as a subjective frame of mind, as spiritual good-conduct, as a God-pleasing virtue, had justified Abraham before God according to Paul's view, the apostle would thus have severed the very nerve of his teaching of justification. For we have seen that faith does not justify man before God because of its subjective character, but that faith justifies man only on account of its object and content: Christ or God's sin-forgiving grace in Christ. Abraham knew and grasped in faith the promise of this grace. And this faith was reckoned to him for righteousness. Abraham believed God, believed what God has promised him. Not that Abraham believed in God in general, believed and obeyed His Word, but that he believed the promise, that was counted to him for righteousness.

The content of this promise made to Abraham was Christ. Through the one Seed, Christ, Abraham should obtain that countless posterity from all people; through the one Seed, Christ, the blessing should come to all peoples. And according to the first Gospel of Gen.3,15 this blessing should essentially consist in the redemption from the devil's power, from sin and death. In and with the promise Abraham had grasped in faith the future Christ and the salvation in Him. And this faith with such content was

reckoned to him for righteousness. Freedom from sin, righteousness merited by Christ and appropriated by him in faith, was reckoned to him by God as his own righteousness.

Paul has shown from Scripture that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. By that he showed that Abraham was not justified by works and so had nothing whereof to boast, since faith and works exclude one another. Lest someone should think that Abraham, of whom Scriptures report so many excellent works, might possibly have received something through his works, the apostle brings forth a sharp contrast between work-righteousness and justification by faith. From this follows that in the case of Abraham, who was justified by faith, justification by works was utterly excluded. Nevertheless, the apostle no longer speaks specifically of Abraham. It is not a historical question which he discusses, in that he asks how it stood with father Abraham; but by the example of Abraham he wishes to strengthen his teaching, to present Abraham before the eyes of all future generations as an example of faith and the righteousness of faith.

Verse 4:

The apostle introduces an axiom from every-day life: Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. The reward of a laborer, who does his work well, is not according to grace but according to debt, is deserved reward. The employer grants no favor when he pays the laborer his wages for he only pays what he owes. The apostle applies this to justification. To him who works, who seeks to do the works God demands of men in the law and thereby to satisfy God, to such a man - presumed that he has perfectly fulfilled the law - God gives righteousness, not according to grace but according to debt. It is no demonstration of free favor and grace but simply an act of divine righteousness when God regards as righteous a man who has fulfilled all the righteousness of the law. But that is a case which does not occur in reality.

Verse 5:

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. The object of faith and trust is here He, God, who justifies the godless. Man according to nature is a godless person. He not only violates divine law and denies God obedience but also deprives Him of proper respect and honor, does not acknowledge Him as God and is hostile to Him. And now godless man stands before God, and according to all human reckoning he can expect nothing else but the judgment of damnation. But what does God do? Instead of condemning the godless, He justifies him. By His decree He pronounces him righteous. He reserves for Himself the right to absolve godless men.

The first humans were called to account by God and convinced of their sin and transgression. Nevertheless, God promised them redemption from sin. Gen. 3,15. Weighed down by capital crimes Israel stands before God's tribunal. But what does the Lord say? "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Is. 1,18. He is not a God who has pleasure in wickedness. Ps.5,5.

Under all circumstances God is and remains holy and righteous. And He does not compromise His holiness and righteousness when He pronounces the godless righteous. We know that God justifies sinners through Christ, that Christ with His blood atoned for all the godlessness of men and thus satisfied divine holiness and righteousness and still God's anger. Nevertheless, the contrast between man's nature and God's judgment is not thereby made more tolerable to human reason. It was God Himself, who sent His Son into the flesh and set Him to be a propitiation in His blood. Verily, He is a wonderful God, the God as He has revealed Himself in Christ, in the Gospel, the God who justifies the godless.

There is no reasonable explanation for this wonderful judgment of God. For nothing in man motivates or causes God to declare the godless righteous. Not even man's faith. The apostle characterizes justifying faith in such a way as to exclude every thought of the dependence of God's judgment of justification upon man's faith. That in which faith trusts is already present if faith relies on it. What faith grasps is a prepared gift. Faith means to take what is there. One does not do justice to what the apostle writes if he interprets that the believer looks confidently to God that He will justify him. That God justifies the godless is a firmly established fact, independent of faith. And faith accepts just this established fact. When God gave Christ into death, He already pronounced the ungodly righteous in Christ. And thus He showed Himself to be and so is a God, who justifies the ungodly. This judgment of God and God, who thus judges, are made known and presented to ungodly men in the Gospel. And he who believes the Gospel accepts God's judgment, presented in the Gospel, and trusts in God.

Here also faith stands in contrast to works. The believer is described as one who is not concerned about works, but rather believes in God, who justifies the ungodly. He who believes leaves all works behind when he comes before and deals with God. He has learnt that he cannot stand before God even with his best works, and presents himself as ungodly and relies on God, who justifies the ungodly. And such faith will, as the apostle writes, be reckoned to him for righteousness. Faith is reckoned for righteousness, not because it is a good work or beautiful virtue, a God-pleasing conduct and disposition of man, but alone of its object. For faith stands in opposition to works. And he who believes in God, who justifies the ungodly, acknowledges and confesses that he is an ungodly person.

What the apostle declares here does not pertain to the original justification, whereby man from the state of sin enters the state of grace, but concerns the Christian's entire life. Paul wrote to Christians, who already stood in grace, and reminded them how man, also after he becomes a Christian, is justified before God. Justification goes through the entire life. Not by works but by faith alone is the daily food for the Christian's soul. That God justifies the ungodly is the Christian's comfort in life and in death. Even though a believing Christian is not ungodly as the unrepentant, unbelieving children of this world are, nevertheless, he always confesses that there is much godless-

ness in his heart. And so in faith he clings to this: God justifies the ungodly. Faith does not conclude thus: I am certain that I earnestly believe in my Savior; therefore, I am justified before God. A believing Christian does not make the pulsation of his life of faith a criterion for his state of grace. In this case he would fare badly. For faith often avoids its own feeling and experience. And he will often be troubled as to whether he really has true faith. Faith rather concludes: Oh, how godless I still am! From my heart continually proceed such wicked and godless thoughts. Of this there is no doubt: I still am a poor, unworthy sinner. My sins are ever before me. But God's Word tells me that justifies these very sinners, the ungodly. Therefore, I undoubtedly belong to the number of those who God justifies. All ungodly men should make this conclusion. That most of them do not is because they do not believe the Word and do not inquire concerning God and the righteousness which avails before God.

Verse 6:

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works. David stands in between Abraham and Christ. In him the history of Israel reached its climax. Therefore, midway in the Old Testament history of salvation, as in its beginning, accordingly at all times, there was for sinners the same way to salvation, which now is proclaimed through the Gospel to all peoples. Also David, who did not, as Abraham, live before but after and under the law, knew only of a justification of sinners by grace, without the works of the law. He praises man as blessed whose sins are forgiven. Ps. 32, 1.2. David experienced the sin-forgiving grace of God in his own heart when the prophet Nathan spoke to him God's absolution after his grievous sin against Bathsheba and Uriah. And this grace he commends to other sinners.

Verse 7.8:

Saying, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven. To forgive sins means to take them away. To be sure, it is impossible to undo the evil which one has committed. Sin remains and has its consequences, as was the case with the double sin of David. But forgiveness covers sins before the eyes of God so that they become invisible and appear as not having been committed. Thus it reads further: And whose sins are covered. This is explained by the words: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin, verse 8. With these verses of the Psalm Paul wants to show that, according to David, righteousness is reckoned to the sinner without works. To him, therefore, imputation of righteousness is the same as the non-imputation of sins, the forgiveness of sins. He whose sins are forgiven is sinless and righteous before God, just as God will have him be.

Verse 9:

The apostle next asks: Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? Does this blessedness concern circumcision or uncircumcision also? Does the blessedness, of which David has spoken, concern only the circumcised, as David was circumcised, or the uncircumcised also?

Verses 9.10:

The answer: For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. That the apostle already said, but he applies it according to another angle. He returns to Abraham and asks: How was it then reckoned? In what condition was Abraham when faith was reckoned to him for righteousness? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? The answer: Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. He was yet uncircumcised when God reckoned his faith to him for righteousness. It follows then that David calls blessed not only the circumcised, as he and his contemporaries, but also the uncircumcised, as Abraham. Jews and Gentiles through faith have the forgiveness of sins, have the righteousness which avails before God. And this thought is further expounded, no longer in retrospect to David's statement, but with reference to the story of Abraham.

The Jews boasted and were proud of circumcision, which distinguished them from the heathen. They considered it not merely an advantage but a kind of merit. They taught that every one who was circumcised shared in the future kingdom. In very high terms they spoke of their father Abraham's circumcision and thought that because of this outward sign and work, since he circumcised himself and every male in his house, God loved and esteemed him.

Verse 11:

Against this the apostle urges: And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised. Abraham had received circumcision. It was no work of his but a gift of God. Further, Abraham was circumcised after he was justified by faith. Therefore, circumcision could never be the means of his justification. Circumcision, moreover, was a seal of the righteousness of faith which Abraham had in uncircumcision. This righteousness is the righteousness which Abraham received and applied to himself in faith. Righteousness of faith was sealed to him through circumcision. This outward sign on the flesh should and did assure him that he was righteous before God. And that was and remained the meaning of circumcision among Abraham's descendants.

Paul does not deny that circumcision was an outward sign, which distinguished Abraham's seed from the heathen, nor that circumcision of the flesh called to mind the circumcision of the heart. 2,29. He is concerned, above all, with the value of circumcision, that it was a sign, a confirmation of the righteousness of faith. That agrees with God's instructions in Gen. 17,11, according to which circumcision should be a sign of the covenant, resting on grace and God's promise of grace. Moreover, this is also true with regard to the New Testament sacraments, especially with regard to baptism, which corresponds to Old Testament circumcision, that they are the sign, the seal and pledge of divine grace, of the righteousness which avails before God.

Verses 11.12:

That he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised - the father of the believing Gentiles - that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision - the father of the believing Jews-

to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. Abraham is the father of the believing Gentiles and of the believing Jews, the father of all believers, "our father." Fatherhood in the spiritual sense is meant. Abraham is not the author of the faith of the believing Jews and Gentiles, as though they owe their faith to him. Children have the nature of their father. And wherein father Abraham and his children resemble one another, what they have in common, is the same faith. Through faith every Jew and Gentile become children of Abraham, all believing Jews and Gentiles walk in the footsteps and follow the example of Abraham's faith. Gal. 3,7: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." That is, of course, justifying faith. To them also, as to Abraham, righteousness will be imputed.

There is a great, holy family upon earth, at whose head stands Abraham, the father of faith. This is the congregation of all believers from the Jews and Gentiles, all sinners justified by faith. The patriarchs before Abraham also belonged to this congregation. The first believer was Adam. Nevertheless, since Scripture especially extols the faith and justification of Abraham, he is esteemed the father of believers. By natural descent, also according to circumcision, Abraham was the father of Israel, God's Old Testament people. However, God's true people, to whom also the believing Israelites belong, are all believers gathered from all peoples of the earth. It is a comforting and uplifting thought for every individual believer that he through justification by faith belongs to the great family of Abraham's children, of God's children on earth.

Verse 13:

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. We are not to think of the promise that God would make Abraham a father of many nations. Gen. 17,5. For the many peoples, whose father Abraham is, are all believers, who are being gathered from all the peoples of the earth. And this seed is not the object, but, like Abraham, the receiver of the promise. Paul rather refers to such promises of God as Gen. 12,7; 13,14.14; 15,18; 17,8, in which Abraham is promised the possession of the land of Canaan. The earthly Canaan, however, was only a pledge of the better, perfect inheritance, the heavenly Canaan. Abraham waited for a city, whose Builder and Creator is God, for the city of God above. Hebr. 11,10. The world promised Abraham and his seed is the new heavens and a new earth, of which Peter writes in 2: Pet. 3,13.

Final salvation consists in possessing and enjoying the future world. And now the apostle advances that this promise was not given to Abraham and his seed through the law, as though one could obtain the future inheritance by fulfilling the law, but through the righteousness of faith. To that Abraham, who was justified by faith and who then received circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of faith, was the promise of the possession of Canaan and thereby of the future world given and confirmed. Thus Paul speaks of the final goal and purpose of the righteousness

which avails before God. He who is justified before God through faith will also inherit the world, which God has prepared for mankind, the world of God, the glorified world, wherein only dwells righteousness.

Verses 14.15:

Man is never saved by the law or by its works. For if they which are of the law, if those who follow the law, be heirs, desire salvation through the law, faith is made void, faith becomes empty and meaningless, and the promise made of none effect. And why? Because the law worketh wrath. It accomplishes upon man God's anger, the opposite of blessedness. For where no law is, there is no transgression. Stated positively, the law always brings along transgression. That no sinner can fulfill the law is regarded as self-evident, for Paul has stated that through the works of the law no flesh shall be justified before God. Therefore as concerns the sinner, the law always has transgression as result. And transgression of the law awakens the wrath of Him who gave the law.

Verse 16:

Therefore, because man cannot obtain salvation through the law, it is of faith, that it might be by grace. Faith takes and grasps what God gives and promises out of grace. As man is justified by grace through faith, so he is also saved by grace through faith. And to that end, without any regard for man's works or conduct, God by grace gave the promise of salvation, so that it might be sure and certain.

To the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. If it were in any way dependent on man's deeds or conduct, it would be uncertain, for there is no relying on man's works. It rests solely on God and His gracious will. God out of pure grace promised the inheritance to Abraham and his seed. Therefore, the promise is absolutely certain. We can in faith confidently trust in the same. And for the whole seed this promise is sure and certain, not only for him who possesses the law, the believing Jews, but also for him of Abraham's faith, who as Abraham believes in uncircumcision, the believing Gentiles. Not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham.

The apostle finally remarks of Abraham: Who is the father of us all. Abraham is the father of all believers, of the Jews and Gentiles. He is that for two reasons. First, all believers have the faith of Abraham, and, as Abraham, are justified through faith. Secondly, all believers, as Abraham, receive the inheritance, salvation through faith.

Verse 17:

That Abraham is the father of all believers is in harmony with a word of Scripture. As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations. Gen.17,5. According to the apostle's application and the original passage itself, the mass of peoples is the spiritual posterity of Abraham, the believing children of Abraham from Israel and the many heathen peoples. For outside of Israel only few peoples descended naturally from Abraham. The first and foremost promise, which Abraham received and which per-

meated the later promises, that through Abraham all the families of the earth should be blessed, Gen. 12,3, clarifies this promise of Gen. 17,5.

Before him whom he believed, even God. Abraham is the father of all believers. At his time, however, Abraham was only before God the father of many believing children. As he received that promise, he stood alone in his faith. The son of the promise was not yet born. Thus it was with him; thus he stood before God as a father of many peoples.

Even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Both attributes guarantee that God could and would fulfill His promise to Abraham and make him what He at that time considered him: the father of many peoples. Paul speaks of the conversion of many peoples into children of Abraham, into children of God, as a quickening from the dead, rather than the awakening of the dead. The second attribute also points to the conversion of the heathen. God calls those things which are not as though they were. While yet alone, Abraham stood before God as, and was declared by God to be, the father of many peoples. And the God, who quickens from the dead and calls into being what is not, will in His time certainly also awaken the heathen world, dead in sins, to a new life and call into existence the children of Abraham through His powerful, creative Word.

To this Abraham's faith was also directed. Abraham believed what God promised him. Already in Gen. 15,6, after God told him, "Thus shall your seed be," he had the confirmation that he believed in the Lord. And so he received in faith the other promise, which made him the father of many peoples. The chief object of Abraham's faith, as of God's promise, was Christ and salvation in Him. To this promise, however, the other was closely attached, that through Abraham all the nations of the earth would be blessed, that many children of all peoples should share in Christ's salvation. That Abraham believed this, believed God, who makes the dead alive and calls into existence what is not, clearly shows the character of his faith.

Verse 18:

Who against hope believed in hope more closely characterizes Abraham's faith. Abraham believed against hope, that is, where according to human reckoning and the course of nature there was nothing for which to hope, since that promise of a countless posterity contradicted the natural development of things. Abraham believed in hope, in that he with ardent longing reached out for the promised blessing. Abraham's faith is placed under the aspect of hope, since the faith of the Old Testament believers reached out toward future things and blessings.

That he might become the father of many nations. This is not the object of Abraham's faith. We rather translate: "so that he would become the father of many nations." It was God's aim that Abraham should become the father of many nations. Many peoples should walk in the footsteps of Abraham's faith and thus become Abraham's children. And so it is characteristic of all believers that they against hope believe in hope. Christian faith

runs directly counter to nature and reason. This should take place according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. That Abraham should be a father of many nations, Gen.17,6, is also in harmony with the Word of God, which he had heard earlier, Gen.15,5, "So shall thy seed be." that is, as countless as the stars of heaven.

Verse 19:

The apostle continues to describe Abraham's faith. First, negatively, he denies that Abraham became weak in faith, that he considered his and his wife's impotence. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. When Abraham was 99 years old and Sarah 90 years old, when he had lost his generative power and Sarah her power of conception, God gave him that promise: "I have made thee a father of many nations." And he further promised that He would give Sarah a son. Both promises stood in close relation. Through Sarah's son, Isaac, Abraham should have a countless human posterity and also the one Seed, Christ, and through Him the countless spiritual posterity.

That Abraham and Sarah should in their old age become father and mother seemed unbelievable and went against all human expectation and directly contrary to the course of nature. One would not have been surprised if Abraham had become weak in faith and doubted God's promise. But no, he did not become weak in faith and revealed this by not considering his and Sarah's dead body. Abraham did not regard his and his wife's physical constitution. He did not consider, did not center his thoughts upon that, did not reckon with what he saw, with what he felt and experienced, namely, his bodily weakness. He put nature, reason, feeling, experience, completely aside and thus showed that he did not become weak in faith.

But in what way? Does Paul's judgment of Abraham agree with Gen.17,17: "Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart; Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?" Was that not a question of doubt? Many believe it was, but add that Abraham did not countenance this doubt long and soon overcame his weakness in faith. Yet, as certain as this is that all believers experience weakness in faith and that also Abraham became weak in faith, e.g., when he at the request of Sarah took Hagar as his wife; it yet would be surprising if the apostle just in such a case, where the Old Testament showed Abraham's weakness in faith, had praised Abraham for not becoming weak in faith. On the contrary, Abraham's reply to the Lord's promise are not the words of one who doubts but of one who is astonished and leaps for joy. His laughter showed boundless joy in his heart. Abraham completely disregarded his son Ishmael, whom he until then had loved so tenderly as the one upon whom the hope of the blessing rested. Moreover, he forgot his own impotence and that of aged Sarah and definitely saw that he should have a heir from her. For that reason he laughed and rejoiced. And afterwards from this laughter and unspeakable spiritual joy he derived the name of Isaac, as an everlasting remembrance and sign of such a beautiful, steadfast, and certain faith.

Verse 20:

And the positive side of Abraham's faith. Instead of becoming weak Abraham rather became stronger in faith with regard to God's promise. He disregarded his and Sarah's impotence and resolutely directed his glance to God's promise. It was God's promise, God had promised him those unbelievable things. And becoming absorbed in God's Word and promise, the power of God in him became mighty, and so he became strong in faith. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith. Unbelief is doubting what God has said and promised. But Abraham did not doubt in unbelief. What came forth from his inner struggle was not unbelief but a strengthened faith. What he saw, felt and experienced could easily have aroused doubts, but he gave no room to such thoughts. God's Word and promise always won more room in his heart. Thus he became strengthened in faith.

Yes, Abraham is the father of us all. So the faith of every believer has the same character and quality as Abraham's faith. Abraham is the prototype of faith. We can and should from his example learn what justifying faith really is. True faith or the Christian faith looks away from one's own weakness and frailty, from one's own sinfulness and corruption, and looks alone to God's promise, which for us essentially has the same content, as it had for Abraham: Christ and His salvation.

How is it with us Christians? When we look into our hearts and lives, we find much sin, corruption and unrighteousness, and in our hearts and minds often feel terror for death and damnation. It appears unbelievable and impossible that God should be gracious to us and save us. However, we do not permit ourselves to be misled. We conquer the doubts which arise from the natural heart. We do not listen to the voice of heart and mind but hear only the voice from above, God's promise, which in Christ promises salvation, grace, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, life and blessedness. And we know what God's Word says to us is the truth and more certain than what our own hearts tell us. And the longer and more perseveringly we bury heart, senses and thoughts in God's word and promise, all the more will we become strengthened in faith and be filled with the Word and grace of God.

Giving glory to God. Considering God's promise, Abraham gave glory to God. True faith gives God the glory. Man gives glory to God when he acknowledges Him to be the almighty and all-gracious Creator, thanks Him for His kindnesses and acknowledges Him as the Lord and Master of his life and fulfills His commandments, which are written in his heart. Man gives glory to God when he goes about in the limits the Creator has set for His creature, deals and walks according to God's will and commandment. This due glory men denied God, as the apostle pointed out. But Abraham, in giving glory to God, was not merely fulfilling the fundamental duty of the creature to the Creator. Then Abraham's faith was nothing more than obedience to God and His commandment. However, we are not in the limits of creation and law, but in the sphere of redemption and Gospel. Abraham's faith was solely directed to God's promise and not to the law.

Verse 21:

And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. Abraham was firmly and fully convinced that God could do what He had promised, that He could and would make him the father of many nations, prepare salvation through his seed for all nations of the earth. He had absolute trust in God's power and grace, which guaranteed the fulfillment of the promise.

Faith is essentially complete persuasion, firm conviction, certainty. The believer trusts that God, in spite of his own unworthiness and impotence, will really give him what He has promised in Christ, namely, righteousness, life and salvation. And with such confident faith, certain of victory, man gives glory to God. Thereby he acknowledges Him as the One, who has revealed Himself in Christ, in the Gospel, as the almighty and gracious Redeemer and Savior of sinners. He who firmly trusts in God and His promises glorifies God, not in that he advances God's honor by his deeds, but in that he renounces all his own work, lets God alone rule, simply takes what God promises, gives and extends to him. Yes, such worship, as man only takes and receives from God grace, salvation and all blessings, is much better, greater, higher nobler, holier and more pleasing to God than honoring and praising Him by works and conduct.

Verse 22:

And therefore it (faith) was imputed to him for righteousness. Faith justifies not because it gives glory to God, which man as creature owes God, not because it is the fulfillment of man's duty to God, nor because of its perfection or strength. Faith is reckoned to man for righteousness because it clings solely and alone to God's promise and takes out of the promise grace, salvation and righteousness.

Verse 23.24:

Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also. What was written concerning Abraham was not written only for his sake, that the world after him should know that faith was imputed to him for righteousness; but also for our sake, that we might learn from Abraham's example how we are justified before God.

Also to us faith should be imputed for righteousness, for us also, to whom it shall be imputed. Under what condition? If we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. We Christians believe in God, who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead, in the Father of Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ Himself. Paul mentions Christ's resurrection in order to let Christian faith appear analogous to Abraham's faith. Abraham believed in the God, who quickened the dead, and we Christians believe in the God, who revealed this His power by raising Jesus, the Crucified, from the dead. The pious of the Old Testament believed in the future Christ; those of the New Testament believe in the Christ, who has come and appeared in the flesh.

Verse 25:

Christ's resurrection is not in itself alone the content and object of Christian faith, but in its connection with His

death and inclusive of the effects of both. Thus it reads further: Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification. Christ was given into death in order to atone for our transgressions. And then He was raised for our justification. As the atonement of our sins is effected through Christ's death, so our justification through His resurrection. As in and with Christ's death the atonement of our sins is established, so in and with His resurrection our justification. God raised Christ because He wanted to justify us. Our justification is the result of Christ's resurrection. The righteousness which avails before God was effected through Christ's death. If man's sin is really atoned, he is justified before God. But both, atonement and justification, are confirmed and sealed through the resurrection of Christ. By raising Jesus from the dead, God declared that His death had fulfilled its purpose, that sin was atoned, that He had accepted the atonement. So this glorious resurrection of Jesus from the dead, this glorious victory over sin and death, was also God's positive, solemn and formal absolution of sinful men.

As the atonement of sins, so the judgment of justification concerns the entire sinful world. The apostle, however, especially directs these facts to the believing Christians. For the believers reflect upon and comfort themselves in what God has done for them in Christ. That, moreover, Jesus in this connection is called "our Lord" shows that through His death and resurrection and their effect Christ is our Lord and that we have become His own. Again we see why faith is reckoned to us for righteousness. Faith applies to itself Jesus Christ, the Crucified and the Resurrected, and therewith atonement and justification. Justification has taken place and has been revealed. This the Gospel proclaims. This we believe. In this we take comfort. He who believes applies this justification to his own person. And therefore, every one who believes is regarded by God as righteous.

Chapter 5

Blessings of Justification

1 - 11

Verse 1:

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God. After a general reference to his previous discussion the apostle speaks of the results of justification. The first result is that we have peace with God. This is the peaceful relation in which we stand to God. Not the suppression of our enmity against God, but the suppression of God's enmity and wrath against us is spoken of.

Verse 2:

Through our Lord Jesus Christ our peace with God is mediated, through that One, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand. This grace is the grace of justification. Through Christ, through His atoning death this grace has been won and the approach to the same opened for us. And by faith in Christ, by becoming believers, we stand in grace. The Christian state is a state of grace, therefore, a peaceful relation to God. If we are justified from sin, if our sins are forgiven, God no longer has anything against us; nothing lies between us and God any more.

A second result of justification is that we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Hope is a blessing in which the Christian rejoices. For what he hopes is the glory of God, that is, the glory which is God's own and in which he will share at some time. Rom. 8,17. Already in 1,16 and 4,13 the apostle spoke of the goal of the righteousness of faith: the salvation or the future inheritance. Here now, where he shows the results of the righteousness of faith, he dwells at greater length with the glimpse into the glorious future, which is opened to believing Christians.

Verse 3.4.5:

We Christians rejoice in the hope of future glory, and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also. Tribulation is the second object of rejoicing. In this respect we can glory in tribulation: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience, and experience, hope. Tribulations redound only to our well-being. For in the manifold hardships faith is exercised and tested towards patience, perseverance and constancy. In such a way faith is also strengthened and increased. In the darkness of suffering the anticipated glory comes all the more brightly before the eyes of a proved Christian. And hope maketh not ashamed, verse 5. Essentially, the hope of a Christian does not perish. Hope would shame us if it deceived us and remained unfulfilled, but it does not do that.

Our hope will certainly be fulfilled, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. The love of God, which guarantees the fulfillment of Christian hope, is certainly not our love to God. For it cannot be said of our love for God that it is poured out in our hearts. What is poured out in our hearts must originally have had its existence outside of us. It is the love which God has for us.

Not in the sense that God showed His love to us by giving us His Spirit and through Him awakening us to a new, spiritual life. But God showed His love to us in that Christ dies for us. The love, wherewith God cherishes us and which manifested itself in the death of Christ, is poured out in our hearts. And this happened through the Holy Ghost, who was given us. The Holy Ghost is richly poured out over us, Tit. 3,6; Acts 10,45; and He declares to us, richly and powerfully, that God loves us, has loved us in Christ, and lets us experience God's love in our hearts. And because the Spirit of God does this, we are absolutely sure of God's love.

Verse 6:

In what respect is God's love a guarantee of our hope? For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For our sake, for our good, in order to redeem us, Christ gave Himself, His own life. His death benefited us because He died in our stead. Christ's love and kindness appear all the greater and are first brought into the right light when we note that we were without strength when Christ died. Without strength designates the moral unworthiness, the moral impotence of the persons whom the offering of Christ concerns. We were sinful, godless, weak, altogether impotent to all that is good. That is to say, we stood before God as sinful, ungodly men. We could not produce nor plead anything before God that should have directed His good-pleasure toward us. The apostle includes himself with his Christian readers and speaks in the name of all who have been justified by faith.

He distinguishes two stages in the Christian's life: the first, when they were weak; and the other, when they were justified through Christ's death. But he does not have his contemporaries in mind exclusively. Noting that Christ died for the ungodly in general, he points to the two great eras of the world, the pre-Christian era and the Christian era, which he dates from the death of Christ. He designates the first as a time of weakness and sin, of general godlessness, the latter as a time when Christ and in Christ the righteousness which avails before God are revealed to the children of men. The death of Christ also had retroactive power. Before Christ there were those who, as Abraham and David, were justified by faith; as also since Christ has come and died, sin and godlessness are yet to be found on earth. However, the difference in time finally coincides with the difference in subject-matter, with the contrast between the Christian and the non-Christian estate.

We of the New Testament era can also say that, while we were yet weak, Christ died for our welfare. By nature and birth we are all weak, sinful and godless; but as a result of the salutary effect of Christ's death we have gone from the state of sin into the state of righteousness. The apostle emphasizes that. Just in this condition of weakness, sin and godlessness Christ's death, love and kindness entered. Men's moral unworthiness was not lessened or mitigated when Christ interceded for them with His offering, for they were unable to do anything that might have given them a better appearance before God.

"In due time," at the time appointed by God, "Christ died for the ungodly." It is not hard to understand why Paul brings forth this point just at this place. Of such a time, as described in the preceding chapters, God had availed Himself for the execution of His decree of redemption. At just that time, when godlessness had increased to the extreme, when the sickness of men had reached its greatest crisis, the Physician should appear and bring salvation to those sick unto death. This served only to glorify God's divine grace.

Verse 7:

What does it mean that, when we were yet weak, Christ died for the ungodly? What kind of love is that? The apostle explains and illustrates by comparing this love with human love. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die. Thus it is among men that one would hardly die for a righteous man. Yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. A freer and perhaps clearer rendition is this: "Yet for the sake of a good thing one would really dare to die." The "good thing" is then the general category, to which also the "righteous man" belongs. Among men the situation is this, that one might really take it upon himself to die for the good, to offer his life for what has real, moral worth, so that this value may not perish. And it does happen, if not likely and often, that one dies for the righteous man in consideration of the good which he has. Thus the righteous man, who can produce something good, is simply contrasted to the ungodly. Naturally, the apostle only speaks of what is righteous and good in the natural sphere, of civil righteousness, in spite of which man remains before God what he is by nature, an ungodly person.

Verse 8:

So far human love succeeds, but only in unusual cases. Altogether different is it with God's love. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. God shows His love toward us in what Christ has done. God and Christ are on the same plane. It is God's love in Christ, which the apostle praises. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. God gave His Son, Christ Himself, into death for such who were sinful and wicked, who possessed no moral quality and were not worthy of any love - nothing being lost had they been damned. That is the unique, incomparable love of God. It transcends all thought. It surpasses by far all human demonstration and thoughts of love.

Verse 9:

From this fact that God loved us, that Christ died for us sinners, the apostle concludes: Much more then...we shall be saved from wrath through him. If and since what the apostle has said is really true, then all the more certainly will we be saved and preserved through Christ from that wrath which all godless men, who remain such until the end, will experience on that Day.

The apostle makes this a little clearer by inserting being now justified by his blood. This characterizes Christ's death as a mighty, bloody death and makes the offering of God's

love appear all the greater. "Being now justified" declares in what respect Christ's death is to our advantage. Through Christ's death and blood we have become righteous. Christ died for all godless men and justified them all through His death. But it is the believing Christians, who have made this blessing of Christ their own. Only they make continual use of and take profit from it. They draw the conclusion, saying and confessing with the apostle: We are now justified; therefore, we will be saved from God's wrath.

That Christ shed His blood for us in God's greatest kindness, the chief testimony of His love. Of this love we are assured through God's Spirit. Therefore, we need not doubt that we will only experience love from God on that Day, and not wrath. We were before ungodly, but through Christ's death we have been justified and become perfectly righteous before God, just as He wants us to be. Therefore, we need not fear God's wrath and displeasure on that Day. The change, that the ungodly have become righteous, is greater than the other, that the righteous are made blessed. The first guarantees the latter. We will be saved from wrath through Christ. The Christ, who on that Day will return and execute God's judgment upon the world, will certainly intercede for and preserve from wrath those whom He has cleansed and justified through His blood.

Verse 10:

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. Our atonement was effected through, and completed in and with Christ's death. We owe our atonement to His death. Christ is expressly called the Son of God. The deity of Christ lies in the balance and gives to His death its incomparable, everlasting value. The death of God's Son served to quiet the wrath of the most high God, determined God to forego His enmity against sinful mankind which hated Him.

While we were enemies of God, there came this great and wonderful change. God's Son intercedes for us. He took wrath and enmity upon Himself, appeased wrath through suffering and death, and so changed our relation of enmity against God into one of friendship; He turned towards us God's favor and affection. And the conclusion: If we, when we were enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, as was really the case; then after we are reconciled, we will all the more likely be saved. Thus believing Christians conclude, who rightly apply to themselves and understand Christ's reconciliation.

If the more difficult has happened, then the easier will certainly follow. The change of God's hostility into friendship, this greatest, most important change of things, guarantees the last change which we yet await. "We shall be saved by His life," in His life. We shall be saved from wrath into the life of Christ, so that we then stand in the life of Christ and divine glory. That is the positive side and fulfillment of our Christian hope. When and after we have been reconciled to God through the death of His Son, then we will with Christ live with God in the heavenly home as reconciled children. As we now have become partakers of the fruit of Christ's death, of reconciliation to God, so we will at that time share in the life of Christ, in the blessed life of glorification.

Verse 11:

And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. We will be saved, translated into the life of Christ, after we are reconciled to God. Not only that, for we are so reconciled that we now joy in God.

There is a difference between reconciliation and reconciliation. One who is reconciled to an enemy does not exactly trust the former enemy but keeps himself at a distance in order to avoid a new outbreak of his anger. He is satisfied if the reconciled enemy leaves him in peace and no longer does him any harm, and he does not expect the enemy to do good unto him.

God's reconciliation is altogether different. This is perfect reconciliation, the warmest friendship. It brings along that we rejoice in our God. Being reconciled to God through Christ precludes us from making an enemy of God again. We rejoice and have absolute trust in God. We expect only good from Him. Such joy and trust in God will not stand the test if we look at ourselves and see how we provoke God by our daily sins. But we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who by His death atoned for all our sins. If it is thus between God and us, if we are not simply reconciled to Him but also joy in Him as our God, how can we doubt that we on that Day will receive no evil but only good from Him, that we will share in the blessings and joys of eternal life? We can indeed be completely sure of eternal salvation.

Our hope does not make us ashamed. And such certain hope of blessedness belongs to the results of justification. We Christians often think too little of our present possession. We regard our justification through Christ as only the first step on the way to salvation, the final goal lying far distant: as though the transition from time into eternity were the essentially deciding step and factor, as to how we should stand before God on that Day. But that is not the case. The greatest and most important has already happened. The decisive step lies behind us. The crisis has passed. We are reconciled to God through Christ's death. Through Christ we are righteous before God. Our account with God has been settled; our eternal lot is decided. Eternal life is the most necessary, the self-evident result of our justification. The difference between righteousness and blessedness. And we are already over the greatest and deepest abyss. We have gone from the state of sin into the state of grace. It is only a small and easy matter for us to go from the state of grace into the state of glory. The essential thing is that God is for us. The other is less essential, whether we joy in our God here amid the tribulations of this time or there in the blessed life of glorification. But the latter will follow since the essential is determined. True, we want to be saved. We long for God's glory. However, the right way to this goal is not to look forward to the future but with mind and thoughts to become absorbed in the present grace, in the grace of justification. The more firmly we become rooted in this, the closer we are to heaven.

First and Second Adam 12-21

There now follows an extended parallel between Adam and Christ, wherein the salvation, for which we owe Christ, is contrasted to the evil, which we have inherited from Adam.

Verse 12:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. Sin is the failure to reach the goal set by God, His will, or a deviation from what is pleasing to God. Or, sin is all inner or outward conduct opposed to the will of God. And of sin it is said that it came into the world. Here world is not the universe but the earth, which God prepared for mankind. And into this world came sin, that is, it made its appearance on earth. Sin was not in the world at first. But then came a change. And since then sin is in the world. Sin was brought into the world by one man. This one man, the first man, Adam, sinned, dealt contrary to the will of God. Thus sin made its appearance and came into existence on earth. The sin of Adam was the beginning and cause of human sinfulness.

"And death by sin." Through that one man, by means of sin, death came into the world. Adam sinned; and the result of, and the punishment for, his sin was death. In and with the death of Adam death came into the world and began to exist on earth. Adam's death was the beginning of human death.

Death, first and foremost, denotes temporal death, but then also the final terrible fate of sinful mankind, eternal death. Death is first the end of life, of this natural life, then the opposite of real life, of life from and with God, of eternal life. Death is the doom which man has brought upon himself by conduct displeasing to God. Death is the total punishment of sin, temporal and eternal death both in one. That Paul also has eternal death in mind when he speaks of death is seen from the contrast between death and eternal life at the close of the chapter.

When the apostle writes "and death by sin," he refers to God's threat in Genesis. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2,17. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Gen. 3,19. After man sinned, having eaten of the forbidden fruit, God condemned him to death and corruption. And on that same day when man ate of the fruit began the execution of the death-threat. On that same day the germ of death was planted into his nature. From that moment his body was a mortal body, on which were henceforth seen all the symptoms of death and corruption. Therefore, death came into the world immediately after the fall, in and with Adam's punishment, and not first with the murder of Abel.

From its beginning death concealed in itself the germ and sting of eternal death. The threat of death was "Thou shalt surely die." When Adam sinned, he immediately tasted the full terrors of death, had also a foretaste of hell and damnation. Because of his sin Adam forfeited his life, also the blessed life

in communion with God and the blessed life of glorification, which he would have gradually entered had he stood the test. 1 Cor. 15, 46. Death, by rights also eternal death, fell to Adam's lot because of his sin. And he would have been and remained a prize of eternal death had the promise of the woman's seed and faith in the promise come into death's way and warded off the most terrible end.

And so death passed upon all men. With Adam death came into the world, and then it passed upon all the children of Adam. Death accompanies the ramification of the human race. All men are from conception and birth subject to death. Every child of Adam every man who is born into the world, has a mortal, weak, frail body. His whole life is a walk towards death. When he has lived his life, he withers and dies, becomes earth, dust and ashes; yes, if nothing else intervenes, he must die and be damned eternally.

And so, in this manner, death passed upon all men. Because of one man's sin it happened that death passed upon all men. Adam's sin was the cause not only of his own death but of the death of all men. Each individual does not by his sins bring death upon himself, for every man, from the beginning of his existence, is subject to death.

For that all have sinned. They all, in and with Adam, have sinned. Death passed upon all men by the sin of one man. And they all have sinned, namely, since that one man sinned. Because Adam's sin was the sin of all men, therefore, it brought death to all men. The apostle does not say that all men must die because they actually sin, but that the sin of that one man, Adam, is the cause of the death of all men.

In what respect was Adam's sin, sin for all men? Because of one man's disobedience all men are sinners before God. God regards them all as sinners because of Adam's disobedience. In other words, God has imputed Adam's sin to all men.

Verses 13.14:

To prove this, a historical fact is introduced. Paul points to the time before the law. Sin was then in the world. For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Where there is no law, sin is not set to man's account by God as a transgression of a divine commandment. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Concerning the rule of death the apostle states, first, over which period of time it extended, and then who its objects were.

Death did not only rule over those who, as Adam, sinned and transgressed a law, as over the men of the Mosaic and post-Mosaic periods; but also or even ruled over those who sinned not after the manner of Adam's transgression, over those men who lived from Adam to Moses. There are not two classes among the latter: such as sinned without having a law and such as had a law and transgressed it. For Paul has designated the time before Moses as a time without the law. The men of the first period, from Adam to Moses, therefore sinned, though they had no positive law,

not after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Thus the sin of those first men did not have the form of Adam's sin, the form of transgression.

Adam's sin was a transgression of a special commandment. And for the transgression of this commandment the punishment of death was prescribed. After God gave Adam the commandment: "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat," He continued: "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2,17. And the announcement of the execution of the death-threat He introduces with the words: "Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee saying, Thou shalt not eat of it." Gen. 3,17. Thus the transgression of the positive commandment appears as the actual cause of death. However, not only the children of Adam but the first generations of humanity already, which had no such positive commandment as Adam, no positive law as Israel since Moses, therefore, were not transgressors, were subject to the power of death.

Concerning death's reign of terror in pre-Mosaic times there definitely testifies, for example, "the book of the genealogies of Adam." Gen.5. There every short sketch of the lives of the pious patriarchs ends with the significant words: "And he died!" How is this fact to be explained? Not by the sins which those first generations committed, for they lacked the characteristic of transgression. Therefore, the assumption only remains that the sinners of the first world-era died because of the one transgression of Adam. For indeed all men die in the same manner, as the first thousands and millions have died. The universal rule of death, which began in the days of Adam and continues throughout all times, was caused by the sin of that one man.

Of Adam it is yet stated: Who is the figure of him that was to come. Christ, of course, is meant. As in 1 Cor.15,45 Christ is called the last Adam, so here from the standpoint of the first Adam He is called the future Adam. Paul says nothing of how Adam is a type of Christ, wherein the similarity between Christ and Adam consists. He only remarks that Adam is a type of Christ.

As was just stated, the apostle has not expressly mentioned wherein the similarity between the first and the future Adam consisted. However, according to everything he has taught concerning salvation in Christ, justification and final salvation,, the reader can draw the conclusion for himself. As by one man's sin death has come upon all men, so by the righteousness of one Man life has come to all men. That briefly is the intended sense of the apostle's comparison.

Righteousness and life are the two chief concepts in the doctrinal presentation thus far. In these salvation in Christ consists. Righteousness and life are the opposite of sin and death. Yes, through righteousness the force of sin is destroyed, likewise death through life. Thus there is a contrast between Adam, who brought sin and death, and Christ, who brought righteousness and life into the world. Nevertheless, there is, at the same time, a similarity, a typical parallel. What the one and what the other has accomplished affects the man, all men. The influence of the

one over the many is evidently the point of comparison. But this parallelism requires one restriction. The effect which the second Adam had upon the many is quite different from the effect which the first Adam had. And this difference in the parallel, touching the relation of the one to the many, the apostle discusses in the following verses.

What is found on the side of the first Adam the apostle calls "offence," that is, fall, error. Before he called it Adam's transgression. What is found on the side of the second Adam he designates in a general way as "free gift," as gift of grace. However, in spite of the typical relation between Adam and Christ, the apostle says that the case is quite different between the free gift and the offence. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift, verse 15.

Demonstrating his point Paul says: For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift of grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. Instead of "all men" the apostle writes "the many," whereby he naturally means all men, in order to create the impression of a great mass and so make the contrast to "the one" appear very strong. The transgression of one brought death upon the whole human race. And if through the fall of one the many died -as is really the case- much more has the free gift abounded unto the many. That the free gift, as the offense, each of one person, affected the many is the exact parallel. That makes Christ an antitype of Adam.

There is, however, a difference in the parallel. The offense affected the many, but "much more" the free gift. If one accurately compares the offense with the free gift, there is on the side of the free gift a plus sign, a plus of evidence and certainty. What Paul contrasts to the offense is the grace of God, the gracious disposition which God shows, and the gift which consists in the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, in the grace which Jesus Christ has shown. In the grace of that one Man, Jesus Christ, God's grace manifests itself. And the grace of God is an altogether different power, is much greater, stronger and effectively more powerful than the transgression of the one man. For that reason it is said of the grace of God and Jesus Christ, not only that it came unto the many, but that it "abounded" unto many, was richly poured out upon them. Therefore, since the boundless grace of God in Christ lies in the balance, all who suffer under the evil effect of Adam's sin can and should be all the more certain that they also share in the free gift of Christ.

Verse 16:

A second difference in the parallel follows. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift. On the typical side, concerning Adam and the offense, what happened to the many was caused by the one who sinned. On the one side stands the one who sinned: Everything depends on him. Concerning the other side, the free gift, it is first of all said that the case was not quite the same: The characteristic "by one that sinned" in the type has no exact correlative in the antitype.

Concerning the offense it is stated: For the judgment was by one to condemnation. The judgment, which God pronounced upon man, resulted in condemnation. The apostle evidently has death in mind since death, the universal reign of death, is the execution of divine judgment. And this judgment was "by one." Because of one man are condemned to death. That one man by his sin was the cause of the judgment of death pronounced upon all men in general. Adam's sin was sin for all men, was imputed to all men as sin.

How is it on the other side? But the free gift is of many offences unto justification. The gift of grace, from the transgressions of many, resulted in the judgment of justification. Because of this gift of grace men, who were condemned because of Adam's sin, are now righteous through the judgment of justification. What God, what Christ, has given men by grace is the righteousness which avails before God. Thus the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. In other words, the many, all men, are justified or absolved from their sins. As we have noted the righteousness which avails before God is, with the apostle, identical with the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, not only the one transgression of Adam, which was imputed to all, but all individual sins and transgressions of men are forgiven.

Verse 17:

A conclusion follows: For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. By the offense of one man it so happened that death rules on earth, that all the children of Adam were at once subjected to death. Since that is so, the other will all the more certainly happen: We will rule in life. On the one side is the rule of life, on the other, the rule of death.

Death is a tyrant, which enslaves men and makes them feel its terrible power. But life from death, eternal life, is freedom. Life excludes all oppression. Those who receive the gift of righteousness, in the present time will at that time rule in life. The rule in life presupposes the righteousness which avails before God, just as the rule of death presupposes condemnation. Already in 1,16.17 the righteousness of God appeared as the preliminary condition of future salvation. And in 5,5-11 the future life was concluded from justification. Man must first be justified before God before he can receive eternal life. This is the gift of God: First, righteousness; and then, eternal life.

Life depends upon the gift of righteousness and upon the individual's obtaining this gift for his own person. That occurs through faith. Through faith man comes into personal possession of the gift, which he applies to himself. Only believers will rule in life. To be sure, justification is for all men. And as a result of this, heaven is open to all men. Nevertheless, only he who takes for himself the gift of righteousness in faith really receives life. Those who reject justification lose the benefit and fruit of the same, eternal salvation. Believers receive an abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. In the gift of righteousness the grace of God, His gracious disposition, was manifested. And it is a fulness of grace and righteousness that the believers receive. Boundless grace and righteousness fall to their lot.

Wherein this abundance of grace and righteousness consists there can be no doubt after what has been said. All the sins of all men, no matter how many or how great and grievous, including the imputed sin of Adam, have been forgiven. And this "by one, Jesus Christ." Through Jesus Christ those who in this life receive the gift of righteousness will hereafter reign in life. By meriting righteousness for men, Christ obtained life for them. The precious name of Jesus Christ, to whom we are obliged for the fulness of all blessings, is emphatically placed at the close of the verse, while the one from whom men received that evil inheritance remains unnamed.

Those who receive fulness of grace and righteousness will hereafter through Christ reign in life. This is more certain than that death has reigned by one. The reign of life is more certain than the reign of death, because it rests upon the firmest foundation: the boundless grace and gift of righteousness or the forgiveness of all sins and transgressions, which have been and ever will be committed until the end of days.

This is the second point of difference in the parallel between Adam and Christ. By one who sinned the judgment of condemnation and death came upon all men; by One, Jesus Christ, righteousness and life were obtained for the children of Adam, who were condemned to death. That is the parallel. The difference is this. A plus is to be noted on the side of the free grace. Christ not only made amends for the harm done by Adam, but also justified the many from all their individual transgressions. Therefore, they who receive this boundless grace and gift of righteousness will rule in life much more certainly than the sin of one has caused the death of the human race.

Throughout the parallel there is a plus on the side of Christ's gift. The complete parallel reads: What Adam as well as what Christ did has affected the many. But the gift of Christ by far surpasses the fall of Adam. The grace of Christ and of God is much stronger, affects the many much more than the offense of Adam. And the gift of righteousness in Christ covers far more sins than the one sin of Adam. Therefore, life is more certain than death.

How comforting that is for the sinful, mortal children of Adam! Yes, what fulness of comfort lies hidden in these words of the apostle! We are all children of death. We are born under the reign of death on account of Adam's sin. Life strives against death. Over the most luxuriant life force blows the breath of death. For us is nothing more certain than that we must die. But there is, nevertheless, one thing still more certain, namely, that we will live. Life after death, of which we see and experience nothing, is more certain for us than death, which we daily have before our eyes. For the great and gracious God, on whose grace life depends, much rather lets grace rule than righteousness, which has condemned all men to death because of Adam's sin. And by grace God in Christ has forgiven us not only Adam's sin but all our own countless transgressions, great and small, known and unknown. Absolutely nothing lies between us and God any more. How can God's gift of eternal life fail us? Yes, we must yet die and lay aside this mortal body and thus pay final tribute to Adam's sin.

But then Adam, sin, death lie far, far behind us. We go through death into life. And we will in life rule and triumph with Christ forever.

Verse 18:

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. Through Adam's sin condemnation, the judgment of death, came upon all men. But through Christ's righteousness came the justification of life.

The righteousness is that which Christ showed, not the imputed righteousness. Previously the apostle mentioned Christ's death and blood as the foundation of justification. However, the death of Christ not only was a judgment which befell Him but was His own deed. Christ gave Himself for us. The atoning power of His bloody offering also rests upon this that it was a voluntary offering. Only a voluntary offering is pleasing to God. Christ was obedient unto death. He showed His obedience by dying on the cross. But this His righteousness goes farther. It embraces His entire obedience to God in life, suffering and death, His active and passive obedience. Christ fulfilled all the righteousness of the law, appeased the righteousness of God, which both demands and punishes. And through this righteousness the justification of life was obtained for all men. Because of Christ's righteousness all men were declared righteous and awarded life.

Verse 19:

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Through Adam's disobedience the many, all men, are sinners before God. In other words, the disobedience of Adam has been reckoned to the many. And because they were regarded by God as disobedient,, they were condemned to death. On the other hand, through the obedience of One the many will be made righteous. If the many are sinners before God through the disobedience of one, so also through the obedience of One the many will be righteous before God. According to time this falls in the past. Through Christ's obedience the many are already righteous before God. The obedience of Christ has been imputed to them. For that reason they were pronounced righteous. To them has been awarded life.

In all details there is, therefore, a parallel between Christ and Adam. Adam has sinned, transgressed, been disobedient. The disobedience of Adam has been laid to the account of all men. Therefore, all men have been condemned to death. That is the type. And the antitype: Christ has been obedient and fulfilled all righteousness. Christ's righteousness and obedience have been laid to the account of all men. But this difference dare not be overlooked, namely, that God, who is superabundant in grace, much rather bestows the merits of Christ upon the many than the evil offense of Adam and its fatal results, and that through Christ's obedience and righteousness not only Adam's disobedience but the disobedience and unrighteousness of the many are overed up.

In these verses is taught universal or objective justification. The apostle teaches that justification of life has been obtained for all men, that the many, all men, are righteous before God, that all men have been justified and absolved from all their transgressions. With Paul justification is identical with the forgiveness of sins. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." 2 Cor. 5, 19. God has in Christ forgiven the world all its sins. The entire Pauline doctrine of justification and all comfort in justification stand and fall with this article of universal justification. So it is fully clear and evident that justification is altogether independent of man's conduct. And thus alone can the individual be absolutely sure of his justification. For it is a cogent conclusion: If God has already in Christ justified all men and forgiven their sins, then I also in Christ have a gracious God and the forgiveness of all my sins.

What the apostle has brought forth in this great and magnificent parallel between Adam and Christ, that we must die and be damned because of foreign guilt and receive life and salvation because of foreign righteousness, is an offensive article for human reason and for the pride of natural man. All attempts to weaken this offense, to make this revealed truth plausible to human reason, only increases the difficulty. One must simply believe Scripture and adore the incomprehensible wisdom of God, which damns and saves men as here written. Not only that upon one man, upon foreign guilt and foreign merit, depend life and death, but that foreign guilt is reckoned to us as our own guilt, foreign righteousness as our own righteousness, belongs to the wonderful wisdom of God. And the Church praises and confesses this divine wisdom, which is foolishness to the world, as her faith.

From one side light is shed upon the darkness. God's wisdom and power serve to comfort and save poor sinners, who groan and languish under the curse of Adam. If the apostle had merely spoken of Adam and the evil results of his sin, we would be unable to comfort ourselves from the discussion. Then with shuddering and trembling would we have to turn away from this crushing truth. However, what he says about Adam only introduces what he says about the second Adam. He puts before our eyes the abyss of Adamite corruption but soon directs our glance from the type to the antitype and shows us the abyss of unending divine compassion. And only for this purpose does he permit us to look into the depths of human depravity, that we rightly estimate the depth and greatness of divine compassion. The comparison between Adam and Christ bids us to conclude: If God has given us over to death and damnation because of foreign guilt, He will certainly apply this rule, according to which He imputes to us what another has done, thus that foreign righteousness, the perfect obedience of Christ, will certainly be imputed to us. The only way we men since Adam's fall can stand before God and be saved is that we, who are destitute of and free from all righteousness, who have as our sole possession transgression and sin, clothe ourselves with a foreign righteousness, with Christ's blood and righteousness. Just as little as we by free resolution draw to ourselves the condemnation of death, since the whole human race was at once subjected to the power of death because of Adam's sin, do we by our own conduct merit and effect the gracious recognition of God, justification of life.

To the comparison between Adam and Christ the apostle yet adds a remark concerning the law. He has spoken of two economies, the economy of sin and death and the economy of righteousness and life. There is also an economy of the law. What is the relation of the law to these economies?

Verse 20:

Moreover the law entered. The law came in between. In relation to both main economies it is of subordinate significance. Further, the law does not aid man to righteousness and life, as some pharisaically-minded Jewish Christians were wont to think, but it is in the service of the first economy. The law entered that the offence might abound. With the increase of offense sin has increased. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. If sin has increased, so much more grace. Yes, grace has excelled sin, increased by the law.

Verse 21:

That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. The law changes nothing in the status quo. As the apostle said before that death has ruled through the offense of one, so he says now that sin has ruled in and with death. In the universal rule of death the rule of sin showed itself and was effected, since the rule of death was caused by sin, by the offense of Adam. This rule of sin in death, however, yields to the rule of grace. It is grace which now rules to eternal life. This is the ultimate goal of grace. And it is through righteousness, which grace directs to men and which guarantees eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who by His blood and righteousness has earned and obtained righteousness and life for sinners.

Pauline Doctrine of Justification According to Rom. 1-5.

The Pauline doctrine of justification according to Rom. 1-5 is now clear. The question Paul discussed was: "How is sinful man justified before God?" And the answer reads in short: "We conclude that a man is justified by faith." We are justified before God, God regards us as righteous, through faith. Faith is counted unto us for righteousness.

In what respect does faith justify? Is it that faith as a conduct of man or obedience to God determines and moves God to pronounce a gracious judgment upon man? Faith then is nothing more than a God-pleasing disposition. The apostle, however, speaks of a justification by faith, which is without works. He places "faith" and "without works" in opposition to each other. Faith, insofar as it justifies, is to him the opposite of all the deeds and conduct of man. God does not regard in any way the work and conduct of man when He pronounces him just. The justifying power of faith lies in its object. Faith must have something upon which it holds, in which it trusts. As the object of faith there appears the grace of God. The grace of God, His free, unmerited love, is the motive, the only motive of our justification. We are justified by His grace, freely and gratuitously. And faith it is which

accepts the grace of God. Faith, which can pledge no work and merit of its own, holds to what God out of grace promises and gives.

It is the grace of God and the grace of that one Man, Jesus Christ, it is the grace of God in Christ, to which we owe salvation. Throughout this section runs the precious name of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Mediator of salvation. God showed His incomparable love, His grace, in that Christ died for the ungodly. God gave Christ into death for our sins. Thus in Christ we have redemption through His blood. Sin is atoned. We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Perfect satisfaction has been rendered divine righteousness. Christ and His bloody merit, His perfect obedience, His active and passive obedience, are the firm, immovable foundation of our justification. We are justified by the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. And it is faith which grasps and takes for its own Christ and His redemption. We believe in Jesus Christ, the Crucified and the Resurrected, whom God offered up for our sins and then raised again. Christ is the propitiation through faith.

Faith grasps Christ and His merit. But in and with Christ, at the same time, the righteousness. That the righteousness which avails before God is present in Christ is clear from the apostle's entire discussion. We are redeemed through Christ's blood and death, that is, we are really freed from sin, from its guilt and punishment. Sin is atoned through Christ's blood. Christ is the propitiation by virtue of His blood, that is, sin is covered in the sight of God, so that God no longer sees it, no longer regards and lays sin to man's account. We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son, so that He no longer has anything against us. God was in Christ and reconciled the world unto Himself and did not impute their sins unto them. So with redemption, with reconciliation, justification is established, the non-imputation or forgiveness of sins. Christ by His death and blood not only earned the righteousness which avails before God, the forgiveness of sins, but established and presented it. The glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the solemn, public declaration of justification and absolution, which God has pronounced upon the sinful world, and through which He has sealed the effect of Christ's death. Yes, through Christ's righteousness the justification of life has passed upon all men. The many, all men, are presented as righteous through Christ's obedience. The obedience and righteousness of Christ, as the sin and disobedience of Adam, have been imputed to all men, God is the Justifier of the ungodly. Therefore, in Christ there is present for all men the righteousness which avails before God.

And faith takes what is there and applies to itself this righteousness. Through faith we share in the gracious gift of God, in the gift of righteousness prepared by Christ. By faith we draw the judgment of justification, which God has pronounced over the ungodly in general, to our own person. So the righteousness which avails before God is a "righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ," that becomes our own through faith; or a "righteousness of God from faith," that becomes our's as a result of faith; and at the same time, a "righteousness of God to faith," that is appointed for faith, that man should accept it in faith; a "right-

eousness of God," that comes to all who believe; simply, a "righteousness of faith." It is a righteousness of which it is characteristic that it is believed and accepted in faith. And because of this we are justified through faith or as a result of faith. Because of this God regards him just who has faith in Jesus; because of this faith is imputed for righteousness; and because of this faith justifies, since it accepts the righteousness which avails before God, God's judgment of justification, and so comes into personal possession of it. We take and grasp the righteousness in faith. Thus we have righteousness. Thus we are justified before God.

An essential point must yet be added. The righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel, as it was already witnessed by the law and the prophets. God has presented Christ in the Gospel as a propitiation before all the world. The entire treasure, the gracious gift of God, namely, Christ, His redemption, the righteousness which avails before God, is sheltered in the Word and is explained and offered to sinners in and through the Word. Faith trusts in the Word, accepts the Word and in the Word grasps Christ and the righteousness which avails before God. This is the nature of faith that it looks away from the person, from one's own unworthiness and impotence and alone relies on God's promise, which forever stands firm and which in Christ promises forgiveness of sins, righteousness, peace and salvation. And because faith applies to itself the Gospel's promise of righteousness and forgiveness of sins, the same is counted for righteousness.

The doctrine of justification, as Paul presents it, finally leads to the secret which we cannot solve. The apostle testifies, on the one hand, that justification of life has passed upon all men, on the other hand, that all the world is guilty before God and worthy of punishment. That is not contradictory. The one time the world is considered in Christ, and the other time outside of Christ. Outside of Christ God is angry with sinners; in Christ He looks at the sinful world with pleasure. The one is a judgment of the law, the other a judgment of the Gospel upon sinners. We cannot grasp and explain how both exist in God at one and the same time: that He outside of Christ reckons to the world its sins, and that He in Christ has absolved the world from sin. The object of redemption and justification is entire sinful humanity, considered apart from the relation of individuals to Christ and the Gospel.

The justification of all happened, as it were, in darkness. When God through Christ reconciled the world to Himself and absolved it from sin, the world knew nothing thereof. It was also in God's plan of salvation to make known to men through the Gospel Christ and His work, so that men might apprehend the same and make it their own through faith. And he who believes the Gospel and in the Gospel Christ and in Christ the righteousness which avails before God, is righteous and from the state of sin and wrath and enters the state of grace and righteousness, is a God-pleasing child, upon whom wrath no longer rests. So the believers, in whom redemption and justification achieve their purpose, are the justified, the redeemed of the Lord. Is. 35,10; 62,12. He, on the other hand, who does not believe but rejects the Gospel of God's grace

in Christ, invalidates God's grace, Christ's redemption and forgiveness, for his own person. For him Christ died in vain. Gal. 2,21. He by such unbelief again puts into effect the forgiven sin and the dead guilt and is now doubly a child of wrath and damnation.

Justification, the righteousness which avails before God, is the preliminary condition, the most certain pledge of future salvation, the heavenly inheritance. Justification of life has passed upon all men. Salvation has been earned and been prepared for all men through Christ. However, only those who share in this gift of righteousness through faith will actually rule with Christ in life.

Chapter 6

Sanctification

1 - 14

Verse 1:

What shall we say then? What follows from what was said, that where sin abounded, there grace did all the more abound? What follows from the doctrine of universal grace? Perhaps this: Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? Shall we persist in sin, so that God may have all the more ample opportunity to manifest His grace, to forgive sins? That is a conclusion which the adversaries drew from Christian doctrine. They said that Christians taught and dealt according to this maxim: Let us do evil so that good may come from it. Similarly also in later times the Christian doctrine of justification by grace has been misinterpreted as though it promoted sin and undermined true morality.

Verse 2:

With indignation Christians reject this conclusion and say with Paul: God forbid. Only he who does not know grace can speak and conclude thus. One who has learnt and experienced but little of grace hates and detests sin and thanks God for His grace, also in deed. Christians, who have become partakers of God's grace through faith, confess: How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? That is quite impossible for us.

Christians do not continue in sin because they have died to sin. Thus the apostle refers to the Christians' conduct begun at their conversion. He advances that their conduct is determined by the fact that they have died to sin. That they have died to sin is similar to the expression that they are dead to the law. Rom. 7,4; Gal.2,19. Sin, as the law, appears as a decisive, ruling power over man's life and conduct. Christians have died to sin, to the law. They have been loosed from that connection to sin, to the law. No longer as before is their life regulated by sin and law.

We have died to sin; in other words, we have been freed from the power, authority, rulership, from the jurisdiction and the coercion of sin. Such liberation from the power and rule of sin is not something which we have done but something which we have experienced, something which God has done. This happened when

we became Christians and were justified by faith. When our sins and its guilt were forgiven, we were, at the same time, freed from the power and the dominion of sin. This liberation from the bonds of sin by God is the innermost nerve of sanctification. Christian life is a state of freedom from sin. From this it follows that Christians, as concerns their personal conduct, no longer live in sin.

Verse 3:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? If you still doubt that you have died to sin, then think of your baptism, the significance of which you well know. We are baptized into Jesus Christ. Through baptism we have been placed into communion with Him. Christ became the Mediator of salvation and by His death obtained salvation for us. By taking our sins upon Himself and atoning for them through suffering and death, Christ redeemed us from the guilt and punishment of sin. Christ through death has broken the power of sin. And so we, being baptized into Christ, were also baptized into His death; and so through baptism have become partakers of His death and its fruit, His redemption, redemption not only from the guilt but from the power of sin. Baptized into Christ and His death, we are freed from sin's power. In us the power of sin is broken.

Previously the apostle spoke of the Gospel as the means whereby God offered and imparted to men Christ, forgiveness of sins and righteousness. In the present passage he states that through baptism we partake of Christ and the fruit of His death. The one does not exclude the other. God has established both means of grace, Word and Sacrament. And the mention of baptism is in place where Christians are reminded of the beginning of their Christian life. For through baptism we become Christians. The preaching of the Gospel precedes the baptism of adults. Matt. 28, 18-20; Acts 2, 41. Adults, those of age, who understand human speech and teaching, are brought into fellowship with Christ and His merits through the Word. For them baptism is a seal and confirmation of the gracious promise of the Gospel. However, since the teaching preceding baptism aims at baptism and since Christ expressly instituted baptism as the sacramentum initiationis, the apostle with full right considers baptism the beginning of Christian life and the means of union with Christ, in that he considers instruction in baptism and baptism as one. Children and those under age, on the other hand, who cannot as yet grasp the Word, indeed through baptism have fellowship with Christ and His death.

Becoming a Christian is becoming a believer. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16, 16. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 3, 26, 27. Through baptism and faith we put on Christ, come into communion with Him and become children of God. Baptism into Jesus Christ implies faith, for fellowship with Christ is not possible without faith. Faith is nothing else than personal contact with Christ. Faith, wrought in adults through the Word, in children through the act of baptism, takes and applies what God offers and

imparts in Word and Sacrament, Christ and the fruit of His death. Therefore, he who believes partakes of Christ and His redemption and is free from sin, not only from the guilt and punishment but from the power and bonds of sin.

Verse 4:

We have been baptized into Christ's death. We have died with Christ in baptism. In baptism we experienced a death; we died to sin. This is a dying with Christ, since we have been baptized into His death and thus share in His death and its fruits. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death. To be buried into death means to die. He who is buried is counted among the dead. We have died to sin. The bonds, that held us captive in sin, are completely severed. And that because we died and were buried with Christ through baptism and so have shared in Christ's death and burial. Christ's burial was also the end of His suffering and proof of His death. As He lay in the grave, He was before all the world as one of the dead.

That we died and were buried with Christ had this purpose: That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. We walk in a new life. From baptism we Christians stand in a new life. That has its likeness in the new life unto which Christ was raised. Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of God. His glory or majesty is the essence of all divine attributes and perfections. Here we especially think of God's omnipotence. At His resurrection Christ entered a new life. And to that corresponds the new life wherein the baptized Christians stand.

Verse 5:

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. We have been planted together, namely, through baptism, in the likeness of Christ's death. That can only mean that we have gone into the closest communion with Christ's death itself. Being planted together in the likeness of Christ's death is essentially the same as being baptized into His death, as being buried with Him by baptism into death. From this fact follows that we also in baptism are planted together in Christ's resurrection. In Christ death and resurrection are closely connected. Christ is the Crucified and the Resurrected. And he who shares in His death shares also in His resurrection. The new life of the Christians not only has a likeness in the resurrection of Christ but springs and flows from it. In baptism we share in Christ's resurrection and in the new life that He entered at His resurrection. In baptism Christ's new life after the resurrection is planted in us. Hence we are flesh of His flesh, bone of His bone. Eph.5,30. And so we are born again to a new life. In this manner we Christians received the new life wherein we now live.

Verse 6:

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him. We Christians should and do know that our old man has been crucified. The old man is the corrupt habitus of man, the sinful nature and disposition implanted by sinful conception and birth, from

which proceed all sinful desires, thoughts, deeds. And this old man is now crucified with Christ, namely, in baptism, since we through baptism partake of His death on the cross and its fruit. The old Adam is drowned, mortified in baptism. It has lost all power.

To what purpose? That the body of sin might be destroyed. This is the real body. It is called the body of sin, the sinful body, not as though the body were the essential seat or source of sin but its organ and tool. Sin or the old Adam endeavors to perform the evil lusts through the medium of the body and its members and does perform them in natural man. In baptized Christians, on the other hand, the body of sin is put out of commission. Where the old man is crucified, where the power of sin is broken, there also the body of sin, the body as a tool or organ of sin, is rendered powerless.

This also has its purpose. That henceforth we should not serve sin. It is God's will that we no longer serve sin. And just this our baptism enables us to do. We need no longer serve sin because the old Adam is dead and no longer rules the body.

Verse 7:

We need no longer serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. The old Adam is crucified. We have died to sin. We are free from the power and rule of sin. The power, which sin has over man, may be thought of as a claim that sin urges against man. Sin, the master, demands obedience of man, enslaved and born in sin. But one who has died is released from the jurisdiction of sin. This is a universal truth which applies to temporal death. One who dies in the natural way is freed from the jurisdiction of sin. For sin and the service of sin concern this lifetime. Upon death judgment makes its appearance. And after death the servants of sin will be paid the wages of sin. Man will be rewarded according to what he has done during his lifetime. This is also true with regard to the death which we Christians experienced in our baptism. We have died. Our old man has been crucified with Christ. Sin has lost all power and claim over us. So we need no longer serve and obey sin.

Verse 8:

Therefore, the apostle concludes: Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Paul does not merely repeat that we are planted together in the likeness of Christ's resurrection, but explains what kind of a new life we Christians have through baptism.

Verse 9:

Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. First is described the nature of Christ's present life. Our's is similar to His since we through baptism become partakers of His resurrection. Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more. Death is no longer lord over Him. The life, which Christ entered at His resurrection, is quite different from His former life on earth, which was subjected to and ended with death and burial.

Verse 10:

For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. From Christ's death it is evident that He died unto sin. Death ended Christ's relation to sin. Christ's life was determined and ruled by sin, namely, by the foreign sin of men, which he took upon Himself. What He did, experienced, suffering in the days of His flesh served to atone for and to destroy men's sin. This purpose was realized when He died. Sin is atoned once and for all. And so Christ's former relation to sin ended with His death. He is no longer concerned with sin. What He now lives, since He has been raised from the dead, He lives unto God. His present life is directed toward God. His divine nature and glory now also permeate His human nature and life. At His resurrection He entered the state of glory.

Verse 11:

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, as Christ, we Christians are dead to sin and live unto God. We now find ourselves in a divine existence and life, since the new life of Christ has been implanted in us through baptism. Since His resurrection Christ lives entirely unto God, also according to His body. Since our baptism we live unto God according to the inner man. The new life of conversion is turned towards God. The new man, who is created in baptism, is directed to God, rejoices in God, thinks, speaks, loves, desires only what is God's. Thus we now live unto God with Christ, and, at the same time, in Christ Jesus our Lord. We live in the fellowship of Christ, and so our life with Christ is sheltered in God.

Verse 12:

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body. Christians should henceforth not permit sin to rule over them. That presumes that sin is still in them, although it has lost its power. They should not concede dominion to sin, henceforth not serve it. Christians should not let sin rule in their mortal body. Mortal body is not man according to body and soul, but that body that dies and rises on the Last day. The body appears here as the organ through which sin, when it rules in man, accomplishes its will. The apostle speaks of the mortal, not as above, of the sinful body. The mortal body of the Christians, being weak, mortal and frail, is a sickly tool of the Spirit, which easily gives in to the will of sin.

Verse 13:

This tendency to sin is that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. The evil desires, that flow from the Christians' heart and flesh, are ascribed to the body, inasmuch as they seek to operate through the body. 1 John 2,16. And from the body the discussion turns to the members of the body. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. Christians should not present their bodies as instruments of the unrighteousness of sin, which includes everything that opposes divine law. He who so does places himself under the rule of sin. And that Christians should check and suppress.

According to the apostle sanctification shows itself herein that Christians master and keep the members of their body, hands, feet, eyes, ears, tongue, from the service of sin, that Christians do not permit the gratification of evil lusts and desires through these members. And that is no outward matter, no physical exercise, no athletic test, but a moral conduct, and act of the will. The Christians will opposes the will of sin and keeps in check the body and its members, thereby subduing and crucifying the evil lust of the heart. This is the negative side of sanctification.

The positive exhortation follows: But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Christians should present themselves unto God as living from the dead. This presumes a condition of being dead in and through sin. This we usually call spiritual death. While yet heathen, the Christians were under the rule of sin and walked in all lusts and vices, therefore, were spiritually dead. From this death they have become alive and as such should now give themselves to God, with body and soul, with heart, mind and thoughts commend themselves unto God. This they should do continually. That happens, above all, in daily prayer. At the same time, they should present their members as tools of the righteousness of life. Hands, feet, eyes, ears, tongue, etc., should be continually active in the service and praise of God. And that a Christian does when he does the work that God has prescribed for him.

This then is what the apostle enjoins, and what Christian ministers should enjoin, upon Christians. You have died to sin. Christ by His death has redeemed you from sin, also from the power and rule of Sin. Through baptism you have become partakers of his redemption. The power of sin is broken in you. Your old man is crucified. The bond, that connects you to sin, is severed. You are free, actually and really free, from sin. You need not, therefore, do not, serve sin. Do not let sin rule over you again. Show it in deed that you are free from sin. You have arisen with Christ. Through baptism you are partakers of the resurrection-life of Christ. There has been a new, spiritual, divine life implanted in you. You really stand in a new life. So be active in it. Use and exercise the powers in you and live and serve God with body and soul. By such an admonition a Christian minister actually induces his Christians, places them in the position, makes them willing to do what he admonishes them. This is an evangelical admonition, based on the Gospel and directed to believing Christians.

Verse 14:

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. The apostle assures Christians that sin will not rule over nor overpower them. They are in a state of freedom from sin. Sin has lost its dominion. And that is because they are not under the law, which only demands but gives no power to fulfill the demand, but under grace, which enables them to avoid evil and do what is right and good before God.

Service of Righteousness
15 - 23

Verse 15:

What then? What follows from the fact that Christians are not under the law but under grace? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? Does grace, our state of grace, give us license to sin? God forbid.

Verse 16:

That this is not the case the apostle proves again with an appeal to Christian life, which he places under a different aspect. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey? It is a truth, well known to Christians, that one is the servant of that man to whom he renders obedience. The apostle brings forth very strongly that obedience -and it is voluntary obedience- always brings with it bondage. You are servants of him whom you obey. At first man has the liberty to choose the lord whom he wishes to obey. But when he consents to serve and obey this lord, then freedom ceases. Then he can no longer do what he pleases but must do what his lord wants of him; and he cannot be freed from him at will.

Paul applies the general statement in two ways. You are servants whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. When one gives himself into the service of sin, consents to sin, it becomes evident that he is a servant of sin. He cannot halt on the way of sin wherever he desires, but must do all sin demands of him, also things from which he at first drew back. He is joined and chained to sin and cannot himself loose its bonds and chains. The end of this way is death and destruction.

The other situation is that one is, paradoxically, obedient to obedience. Obedience unto righteousness is evidently obedience to God, in contrast to sin which is disobedience. True * is to obey God, to whom every man owes obedience. If one now devotes himself to the obedience of obedience, to obedience to God, he becomes a servant of obedience. Then in all things he does what obedience to God demands and abides within the limits of obedience. He attains a firm, upright character; he enters the state of righteousness, the righteousness of life. Righteousness becomes his habitus. The apostle says nothing of the end of the way of obedience and righteousness. That he discusses at the close of the chapter, and then the end of both, death and life. Death, already mentioned here as the end of disobedience, is only anticipation. * obedience

Verse 17:

The apostle calls to his Christian readers: But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart. Christians have experienced in themselves that voluntary obedience changes to bondage, but according to the good side, so that they owe God thanks for it. To be sure, they experienced the bondage of sin. Yet this bondage lies behind them, as they with thanks must confess to God. They were, but are no longer, servants of sin. Now they have become obedient from their hearts.

The Christian readers have become obedient to that form of doctrine. This is Christian doctrine, the evangelical truth of salvation, as presented in the preaching of Paul and the apostles. And this form of doctrine, prepared by the Holy Ghost Himself, is the standard for all times. Obedience to Christian doctrine and the right form of doctrine is nothing else but faith. Faith is obedience to the Gospel and thus obedience to Christ, to the God of all grace. The Christians, with whom Paul is dealing, are obedient, have believed from their hearts. That was the beginning of their Christianity.

The willing obedience of faith is a gift of God, for which man must thank Him. For the Christian readers became obedient to the form of doctrine which was delivered you, rather, "unto which you were delivered." God delivered their hearts into the form of doctrine. Or in other words, God wrought faith in them. Nevertheless, it is a free, willing obedience. God works the willingness of faith. And willing obedience then brings about bondage

Verse 18:

Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. Since they, who are now Christians, became obedient to the Gospel through God's grace, they became free from sin's bondage; they became servants of righteousness. Believing Christians are bound to righteousness and cannot be freed from it. One who is born of God cannot sin, live in sin. 1 John 3,9. New birth does not permit it. And though he sins, he must forthwith return from sin into the service of righteousness. Righteousness is a habit with him, as it were, becomes his second nature. This is a blessed subjection. Spiritual bondage is true freedom.

Verse 19:

I speak after the manner of men. In the preceding the apostle used a strong material manner of expression in speaking of the bondage of righteousness, while otherwise bondage is only used in a bad sense. He did that because of the infirmity of your flesh, not only because of their intellectual but because of their moral weakness. For the Gentile Christians, as seen from the Pauline letters, were inclined to moral libertinism and stood in danger of misusing their Christian freedom. Gal. 5,13. Therefore, Paul designated the state of Christian freedom from sin as a state of spiritual bondage. Inasmuch as Christians are still in the flesh, they should know that they have over them a Lord, whom they must obey.

For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity. You, while yet heathen and servants of sin, yielded your members to the service of impurity and iniquity. By performing iniquity you did what was not right before God. For sin is uncleanness, impurity. It stains body and soul. Sin is iniquity, unlawfulness. It is opposition to the law since it denies and violates divine justice and law. This it was formerly. Now, however, since you have become Christians and servants of righteousness, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness, to the sanctification of body and soul. Righteousness is the opposite of uncleanness and iniquity. Christians in their actions should show themselves to be servants of righteousness.

Verses: 20.21:

To strengthen this exhortation the apostle directs a question to his Christian readers: For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? Formerly you were servants of sin and free from righteousness. You were completely unfit for and incapable of doing anything pleasing to God. And at that time what fruit did you have? With fruit is meant man's work and conduct, the product of moral character and condition. What was, therefore, the product of the bondage of sin? The answer: "Those things whereof ye are now ashamed," terrible vices, shameful enjoyments, of which you must be ashamed, for the end of those things is death.

Verse 22:

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God - now you who have become free from sin and become servants of righteousness, God's servants, are actually enslaved under God-ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. The product of servitude to God is a holy conduct, good works which are pleasing to God and helpful and beneficial to man.

Verse 23:

However, the goal of sanctification, of this service of righteousness, is everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. The wages, which sin pays to all those who were obedient to and faithfully served it in life, is death - death in the full sense of the word, temporal death, which is, however, only for the servants of sin the gateway to eternal death. Death is wages, merited reward for sin. On the other hand, eternal life is a free, unmerited gift, a gracious gift of God, mediated and earned for us poor sinners through Christ Jesus our Lord. Hell is always merited - heaven never. Nevertheless, eternal life, though a gift, is yet the end of the way of sanctification. God leads His own, whom He makes righteous and blessed out of grace, to their goal upon this way, upon the way of sanctification.

Chapter 7

Freedom from the Law

1 - 6

Verse 1:

Know ye not, brethren, for I speak to them that know the law, how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? The apostle presents a teaching from the law, and he speaks to such as know the law. He does not say: I speak to those among you, who know the law, that is, to the Jewish Christians. Nor does he direct himself in this whole section exclusively to the Jewish Christians of the Roman congregation. The address "brethren" is to all Christian readers of the letter. All Christians, also the Gentile Christians, knew the law, the revealed, Mosaic law. From the beginning the Old Testament was also read in Christian assemblies. The apostolic preaching, as the Acts and letters of the apostles show, throughout tied up with the Old Testament. The law was always a part of the Church's public doctrine.

Therefore, to the Christians in general, because they knew the law, it was also known "how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth." It is an axiom which lies at the basis of the law and all its individual statements that the law is lord over man, that it has the power and right to command and rule man as long as he lives. The law's dominion extends over one's entire lifetime, but not beyond that. The demands of the law are valid for man who lives in the flesh, but this terminates at death. When man dies, discussion concerning fulfillment and transgression of the law is out of the question. When man dies, he will be rewarded according to what he did during his life; then the law will be God's standard for judgment and reward.

Verse 2:

That the binding force of the law is first broken by man's death, the apostle demonstrates by the example of the law's regulation concerning marriage. For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. A married woman is by the law bound to her husband as long as he lives. If, however, the husband dies, she is free from the law of the husband, from the law that concerns the husband, that she should be his wife and no other's. But at the death of her husband a wife is released from that regulation of the law, from marital ties.

Verse 3:

From this follows the conclusion. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called and adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. If a wife during her husband's lifetime marries another man, she is an adulteress. On the other hand, if her husband dies, she is loosed from the law, that bound her to her husband; she is no adulteress if she becomes the wife of another man.

If the husband dies, the wife is free from the law and may marry again without committing adultery. It is self-evident that the husband, if he dies, is released from the law that concerns marriage. However, the law of marriage is directed to the relation of husband to wife and of wife to husband. Mutual obligation is dealt with here; and if the one party is relieved of such mutual obligation, then the other is also relieved. Therefore, death frees one from all binding force of the law.

Verse 4:

The apostle shows the purpose he had in mind by this example. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead. You are released from the law through Christ's death and now belong to Him. This is a truth that goes beyond the law, was first made known through and belongs to the Gospel. This fact, therefore, is no conclusion from the preceding discussion concerning the law, for the law says nothing of Christ. From the teaching of the law one can conclude nothing concerning Christ and His redemption. From this, that the law has the right to command man in its individual com-

mandments only as long as he lives, that the wife is bound to her husband by law only as long as he lives, it does not follow that Christians are altogether free from the law through Christ. Death frees every man from the binding force of the law. To this corresponds the fact that a death, Christ's death, occurred which destroyed all the binding force of the law. And to the example of the wife and the two husbands corresponds the fact that those who are Christians first belonged and were bound to the law as to their lawful spouse. However, through Christ's death, they are free from the law and belong to another as to their lawful spouse, to Christ the Resurrected. That is the point of comparison.

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." Christ was put to death according to the flesh and by His powerful, bloody death paid final tribute to the law and thereby destroyed the force of the law, the law in its demands as well as in its threats. "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances." Eph. 2,15. Christ by His death redeemed us from the curse, rule and power of the law. And now we Christians through baptism and faith become partakers of Christ's death, of the fruit of His death, redemption and freedom from the law. The law is no longer lord over us. The former relation of subjection to the law, as the subjection of the wife to her husband, is completely and forever broken off. We are dead to the law; we have nothing to do with the law any more, and the law nothing with us.

What Paul writes concerns all Christians. Even though he might have had in mind, above all, Jewish Christians, who formerly lived under the law, yet he does not want to exclude the Gentile Christians. The law, and just that revealed Mosaic law, inasmuch as it is moral law, is meant for all men, and places before all men the demand that they be subject to it. Gentile Christians are free from the law alone through Christ, not because they are Gentiles but because they are Christians.

You are dead to the law "that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead." Christians through baptism and faith are joined to Christ, the Crucified and the Resurrected, as the wife to her husband, joined to Christ, who has arisen from the dead and lives eternally. The resurrected, living Christ is now, after the law has been abolished through His death, our Spouse. He alone has the right and power to command us. And the purpose of this relation to Christ is that we should bring forth fruit unto God, bring forth the fruit of good works out of love and praise to God.

Paul calls his readers "my brethren." The apostle, who said in Gal. 2,19.20: "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ," has a strong affection for the Jewish and Gentile Christians, his beloved brethren, his spiritual relatives, who likewise are free from the law and belong alone to Christ and God.

Verse 5:

For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. More fully now the apostle speaks of bringing forth fruit unto God. He reminds the Christians of their pre-Christian condition. Before they became Christians, they were in the flesh, and their whole being was held captive in their old corrupt nature. Paul includes himself with all Jewish and Gentile Christians, who before had walked according to the flesh and had served sin, and disregards the fact that there were also Jewish Christians, who before their baptism were believing Israelites and were born again through faith in the promise. Nevertheless, this being-in-the-flesh is the condition into which every man is born.

That we were in the flesh brought along that the passions of sin, corrupt emotions and inclinations, were active in our members. These passions were active in our members in that the members of the body put into deeds the evil emotions and inclinations. These passions were mediated through the law, were aroused by the law. Therefore, the law promotes only sin in carnal man. These emotions, passions of sins aimed to bring forth fruit unto death. That was the aim, as it were, the tendency of the passions, to operate fully through the members of the body in actual sins and so bring forth evil fruits, shameful works, that finally bring death and destruction. "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James 1,15. And since the law arouses evil lusts, it also helps to bring man unto death.

Verse 6:

This retrospect into the past should place the present into a much brighter light. But now we are delivered from the law, we have become free from the law, which only aided sin and death, that being dead, since we died to that, wherein we were held. That wherein we were held, imprisoned, is the flesh, Being-in-the-flesh brought along that the law made the passions active and so forced and enslaved us under sin. And since we have died to the flesh, we are delivered from the law, from the grievous rule of the law. Since we have died to sinful flesh, to sin, we are dead to the law.

That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. Since we are free from flesh and law, we now serve God in newness of Spirit. Newness of Spirit mentions the serving's sphere of activity. And this newness is the new state and condition in which the Christian finds himself, the new existence and life in which he moves. It is of the Spirit. This new existence is engendered and ruled by God's Spirit, who is in the Christians. Or, referring back, the resurrected, living Christ it is who works all good and brings forth glorious fruits in the Christians through the Holy Spirit. And this fruit of the Spirit is the right, God-pleasing service. This divine service excludes the other service in the oldness of the letter. What is denied Christians is that they serve in the old, sinful nature, subjected only to the outward letter of the law, wherein man only has before him the law's rigid demand, which gives him no power to do good but rather makes evil lusts active.

We Christians are, therefore, because we are redeemed by Christ and share in His redemption through baptism and faith, also free from the law, not only from the curse but from the rule and binding force of the law. The law, the revealed, written law, is no longer our lord. We are no longer subject to the law. And we should take care lest we limit this precious evangelical truth. We Christians are not without a lord. We are not sovereign. Our own will is not our supreme law. We are free, but free in God. We live to God, we serve Him, we bring Him fruit. We stand under God and are as His creatures, also as new creatures, subject to His unchangeable will. Yet, when we go about to fulfill God's will, the main question is not: What does the law demand of us? but: What is pleasing to Christ, my Lord and Savior and Bridegroom? What is pleasing to my God, the God who has reconciled me through Christ? How and with what can I best serve my loving, heavenly Father? And the answer to these questions will be self-evident.

The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God, who is in us, teaches us to do according to God's good-pleasure and leads us on a straight path, works in us the will and the doing of the good. These good works, which the Holy Ghost drives forth from the believers, to be sure, coincide with the works of which the law speaks. The intention and will of God's spirit, who inwardly teaches, moves, leads and rules us, coincides with God's unchangeable will, which has been expressed in His law. But the works of the believers are not, therefore, works of the law but fruits of the Spirit. A Christian does not think thus of his deeds: I will now exert all pains to fulfill all the stringent demands of the law as accurately and minutely as possible; but without much thought, freely, of themselves, all good works flow from his heart by the power and impulse of the Holy Spirit.

Purpose and Effect of the Law

7 - 12

Verse 7:

In the preceding the apostle showed the Christians that when they became Christians, they became free from sin and law. Therefore, he compared freedom from the bondage of sin and freedom from the bondage of the law. From that it seemed to follow: What shall we say then? Is the law sin? The meaning of this question is not whether the law is identical with sin nor whether the law is the cause of sin, but whether the law is something evil, sinful, something bad in itself - which would be the case if the law demanded something evil of man. The apostle rejects that conclusion. God forbid. The law is not sin, not evil and sinful in itself. Indeed, it has something to do with sin; it stands in a definite relation to sin. And it is now the apostle's intention to explain exactly the law's real relation to sin.

And what he first states concerning this is: Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law. He speaks here, as in the following, in the first person; but what he says of himself is a universal truth, applied to every man who comes into contact with the law. Paul chooses this form of instruction that he illustrates what he wishes to teach concerning the effect of the law by his

own example and experience. What he states of himself, that he had not known sin but by the law, is the same as his general axiom in 3,20: "By the law is the knowledge of sin."

Man errs and sins from birth and sees in what he has done wrong a natural weakness, an easily excusable sin. First when the law comes upon him, does he know what sin really is: conduct displeasing to God, opposition to God's will. Paul makes that clear by the example of the commandment which forbids lust: For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. From childhood on there are active in man's heart all kinds of lusts and desires. Natural man regards this desiring as an impulse of nature and as quite natural to yield to such impulse. However, when the law becomes known to him and tells him not to covet, then he recognizes lust as ungodly desire; then he knows that the desires and thoughts of his heart are contrary to God's will.

Verse 8:

But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. This is the second relation of the law to sin. The law serves not only to the knowledge of sin and evil lust but to the accomplishment of the evil lust. The law also promotes and intensifies sin.

When Scriptures say that the law increases sin, that through the law passions are aroused, they do not mean that the law in or by itself produces such evil effect, but that it is sinful, carnal man with whom the law is concerned; and it is basically sinful flesh which, when it comes under the grip of the law, drives forth evil thoughts, desires, and consequently also evil works from itself. Only in connection with the flesh, with sin, does the law kindle and increase sin. Thus it was stated in 7,5, that when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin, which were aroused by the law, did work in our members. And in the present passage the apostle says that sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in him that evil lust. Sin is the essential cause of evil lust, which makes the law serve its purpose.

What does Paul mean with sin that works lust? Sin, evil in itself, is to be understood as the source and root of all evil. Sin living in man is the natural, corrupt, ungodly inclination of man's mind and will. This then produces evil thoughts, desires, lusts, and finally also evil deeds. However, it is the law that gives sin cause and occasion to effect all evil lusts; or, sin, in that it produces evil lusts, takes occasion by the commandment.

Verse 9:

In what respect does sin bring about evil lusts by means of the commandment? For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived. Without the law sin is dead. That Paul also experienced during his life when he lived without the law. But when the commandment came, sin revived in him. And that is an experience that all men have with the law. When the law comes, sin revives, becomes powerful, and effects all sorts of lusts and desires.

What period of time does the apostle have in mind when he writes "for I was alive without the law once." Some believe it

was the time when he was a Pharisee. Then as yet he had not felt the sting of the law and rightly known and felt sin; then according to his erroneous opinion he was alive and righteous before and acceptable to God and already in possession of eternal life. But it is utterly unbelievable that Paul should have characterized the time when he was a Pharisee, when he aspired with all his powers to the righteousness of the law, when he was really under the law, as a life and state without the law.

Others will refer this period without the law to the earlier childhood of Paul, but then paint the same, with colors which they borrow from their imagination and not from reality, as "the life of childlike innocence," as a "state of life similar to the heavenly condition of the first parents," as a "real beginning of life in God, a pure flame, that without doubt was later extinguished by his own righteousness." Scripture does not know of such a heavenly condition in the life of mankind, born and conceived in sin.

However, Paul does look back to the time of his childhood, but simply says that he once, when he was yet a child and a minor, lived without the law, that there was a time for him when sin was dead. In early childhood man lives without the law, since he does not as yet know the law nor is really acquainted with its content and meaning. After the time without the law there is followed for Paul a time when the law came, when the law, especially the commandment "Do not covet," became known to him. That was the time of his intellectual majority, when he came to the full use of his reason. And then sin, which was before dead, revived. Therefore, during the time when Paul as a Pharisee lived under the law and was zealous for the law and through the works of the law wanted to become righteous, sin, the evil lust, was active in him.

What the apostle inculcates is that sin is dead as long as man lives without the law, but that sin revives when the law comes. But just what do these two facts imply? Without the law sin lacks its essential vital power. Sin lives in man from birth and does not rest in his heart as a dead seed but is active and infects and permeates all impulses, also those of the immature Child. Man, conceived and born in sin, errs and sins from his mother's womb, as long as he is not born again, in all his wishes and desires, in all his involuntary and foolish deeds. The essential power of sin still lies dormant and first becomes active when the law comes. And this essential power of sin is conscious opposition to God and His will. When the law enters man's knowledge and consciousness, then does he first recognize sin as ungodly conduct. From this follows that sin becomes alive and active in him and shows itself as enmity against God. The law, every commandment, opposes the natural sinful emotions and efforts of man. The result is that sin then rises up in anger and as a stream, which first flows quietly, foams and swells when a dam checks its course. Sin holds man's mind and inclination fast to the forbidden fruit and spurs him on to resist the commandment. Sin incites man against God, so that he murmurs against God and hates Him, because He has given such a loathsome commandment and prohibited that after which his heart lusts, so that man wishes there were no law and no God. And so sin drives man to defy God

and to leap over the limits established by Him, works in him every lust, an intensive desire and aspiration for all things which God has forbidden him. Sin has by means of the law accomplished its will and reached its goal, regardless whether man now satisfied his desires; whether the evil lust in that case produces the evil deed; or whether man, moved by outward considerations, keeps himself within certain limits and displays an outward pharisaic righteousness, in spite of which the wildest lusts, nevertheless, rage in his heart.

Verses 10.11:

Concerning the relation of the law to sin Paul further says: And I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. The law brought about the death of the apostle, of man, That is the brief sense of these words and a third effect of the law. The apostle previously spoke of death. Death is the end of sin's bondage. 6,21. Death is the wages of sin. 6,23. When we were in the flesh, the sinful passions were active in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 7,5. These passions, which finally bring death, become active through the law. Sin brings about death; and inasmuch as the law serves sin, it also serves death. The law, every individual commandment, includes the statement: "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them." Lev.18,5. "This do, and thou shalt live." Luke 10,28. In reality, however, the commandment which is to life is found, according to what was said before, to be unto death. While the law reveals sin as transgression, it also indicates the punishment for sin - death. It is an essential part of the law: "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." Deut. 27,26. And while the law, the commandment, increases and intensifies sin and works every evil lust, it also helps towards death, death in its full sense: temporal death, which brings after it eternal death, hell and damnation for the sinner. When the apostle writes "and I died," he speaks of a death, an experience of death, during his lifetime. He wants to say nothing else than that man, as soon as he comes to the knowledge of the law, which convinces him of sin and makes evil lust active in him, has already experienced something of the terrors of death, hell and damnation.

The law does not of or by itself have such an evil effect, but only in connection with sin. It is sin living in man that kills man by means of the law. "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." Sin places before the eyes of man, as the serpent did before the woman, the forbidden fruits and enjoyments as desirable gain and good fortune. But that is deception, for the forbidden fruit conceals in itself death and damnation. And since sin under that illusion directs and holds fast man's heart and intellect to just those things concerning which the commandment says, "Thou shalt not covet," it brings man death and damnation by means of the commandment.

Struggle of the Convert

13 - 25

Verse 13:

From the preceding the apostle raises the question: Was then that which is good made death unto me? Has that which is good brought death to me? Only to retort: God forbid, and again to bring forth very strongly that it was sin that wrought death in him through the good. At the same time, he mentions the purpose which God had in view. Sin should according to God's will -that was His design when He gave sinful man the law- really appear as sin, since it through the good works death. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good. Just in this the evil character of sin shows itself, that it so misuses what is good, the law, and kills and damns me by it.

And sin should in this manner, by the commandment, become sinful above measure. That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. Sin, as it were, surpassed itself and effected a masterpiece of corruption, in that it took the commandment completely into its service and turned me unto destruction. The ultimate purpose, that God had in mind with this, was that wherever sin was revealed and had become powerful, grace should appear in a so much brighter light and abound all the more. But of that the apostle says nothing here, for it was only his purpose to show the contrast between law and sin.

Verse 14:

This contrast he illustrates by his own experience. For we know that the law is spiritual. That is a truth well known to Christians. They know the law as God's law. The law is spiritual for it comes from God, who is spirit. Since the law is nothing else but God's demand of man, it shows its spiritual, divine origin by demanding of man a spiritual, divine disposition, a holy, God-pleasing conduct. But I am carnal, carnally inclined, Paul confesses. I have the nature of the sinful, corrupt flesh. Yes, I am sold under sin, a slave of sin. In what respect he explains in the following.

Verse 15:

For that which I do I allow not. Paul does what his flesh, what sin wills, therefore, the evil. But concerning that he confesses: "I allow not," rather, I do not know. He does not mean to say he was lacking the right knowledge or moral estimation of what he was doing, that he was dealing blindly, without clear knowledge. For when he writes further that he did not want but rather hated what he did, then he well knows what he does is evil. Nor can he mean: In respect to my deeds I am an unaccountable riddle unto myself. The apostle denies that there was something in common between his deeds and inner life. What he does was inwardly strange and foreign to him, for he accomplishes what he does not will, does what he hates and abhors. What deeds he performs oppose the course of his will, are inwardly contradictory to him. For what I would, that do I not; and what I hate, that do I.

By being sold under sin the apostle understands that he cannot do what he wants to do, but must do what he inwardly loaths and hates, that he must submit to a foreign will. Sin is his

master; and it is impossible for him to throw off obedience to sin. Yet being sold under sin must never be taken as actual coercion. Sin always has its seat in man's will. One who always sins sins willingly, voluntarily; other it would be no sin. Sin is the ungodly inclination of the will. Every evil deed proceeds from a spontaneous act of the will; otherwise it would not be evil. So we must distinguish here a double will: the will bound to sin and active in doing evil, and the will that opposes sin and hates and abhors evil. The captivity and bondage, of which Paul complains, accordingly is this, that he, while he is in the flesh, cannot avoid consenting to and doing evil contrary to his own better knowledge and will.

Verse 16:

Paul for his part approves of the law and declares it to be good. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. The meaning is not that he agrees with the judgment over the law contained in the law, as for example Deut.4,8:"And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?", but that he in general agrees with the law and declares that it is good and excellent. This he does by not wanting what the law forbids.

Verse 17:

From the fact that he would not what he does, it follows: Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. It is not his "I", his ego, that does evil, but sin that lives in him. He himself does not want evil but hates it from his heart. Not his ego but sin is the real evil-doer. To be sure, sin lives in me. I am he who sins and not another. But it is not my real ego that sins. My real self stands in opposition to sin.

It is now easily determined whether Paul by his own example describes the condition of the unconverted or of the converted. What Paul says of himself does not at all fit the unconverted. To ascribe to natural, unconverted man the will to do good, hatred of evil, agreement with the law, is purely pelagianistic. Natural man has a free will only to a certain extent, outwardly to live honorably and to make a choice among things as reason comprehends. He can only give the honorable preference to the dishonorable. But he has no powers in spiritual matters. Carnal mind is enmity against God. Rom.8,7. Natural man does not desire and love but hates and abhors all that is God's, all that God wills and loves. So he opposes His law, what is spiritual and divine. The inclination to do good, to desire and love the good, because it is pleasing to God, is a characteristic of the Christian. Only in Christians, who are renewed by His Spirit, "God worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. 2,13.

Paul confesses that he does not do the good that he would, rather does what he would not, the evil. This dissension between desire and deed is only found in a Christian, who is born again by the Spirit of God but not altogether renewed, and who still has sin and the old man. But this conflict between the better will and the power of the material nature, that brings all good intentions to naught, occurs with natural man in natural

limits. Natural man often bows to what is outwardly honorable; but then overcome by evil desires, he does what is shameful. This experience of natural man is something quite different from the experience of a Christian, from the conflict between spirit and flesh, between the renewed self and indwelling sin.

However, are there not expressions here that paint the sinfulness that yet clings to the Christians in colors all too harsh and black? Does the statement "I am carnal, sold under sin" really fit the converted? It is utter foolishness and blindness if one judges that such a confession degrades the Christian and Christian life. All saints, all children of God, who are renewed and sanctified by the Spirit, confess what a disagreeable and abominable thing sin is, that lives in them, and lament over the fact that they are yet so carnal.

What is meant that a Christian is sold under sin? It is not the bondage of sin, to which natural man is subject. An unconverted is completely governed by sin, which drives forth from him shameful lusts and works, 6, 19.21; and though he to some extent lives honorably, it is still sin, unbelief, pride, self-righteousness, egotism, which determine all his activity. On the other hand, the captivity, over which Paul and all saints lament, consists in this, that the renewed ego, the renewed will cannot thrive as it would, that the converted, since he is still carnal, must bow to a foreign will, the will of sin that lives in him.

What Paul says about being sold under sin in no wise contradicts what he has written concerning the Christian's freedom from sin. A believing Christian, a converted, had died to sin, is inwardly free from sin. He does not let sin rule in his mortal body; he shuns shame and vice. At the same time, he confesses and sighs over the fact that he does what he would not, what he hates and abhors. He daily sins much. Out of his natural heart continually proceed evil thoughts, impure desires. Before he realizes it, he has spoken a word for which he is sorry, he has done something which he wishes had not occurred. With his best intention he cannot prevent everything from being tainted with sin. A believing Christian stands in a new, spiritual, divine existence and life; and that is evident in his conduct. He brings forth fruit unto God, daily exercises himself in good works. Nevertheless, he confesses that he does not do what he would. His doing always falls short of his intention. He can never be quite satisfied with his deeds. This is his daily complaint: "This is my grief that I cannot love God as much as I should!" Also his love for the neighbor is yet very weak and defective. In short, a pious Christian would like to shun all sin, only do what is pleasing to God, and fulfill God's will perfectly. But that is utterly impossible for him while sin and flesh cling to him; and it is impossible for him, as long as he lives on earth, to lay flesh aside completely. During this lifetime he will not recover from this conflict between intention and deed, between flesh and spirit. That is his present bondage.

Verse 18:

The apostle now writes more definitely about sin living

in him. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. Inasmuch as he still has the flesh, nothing good but only evil lives in him. Flesh is man's corrupt nature. By nature and birth man is flesh, altogether corrupt. Even the nobler powers and abilities of man, understanding and will, are corrupt. And the converted also has the flesh, has not altogether laid aside his corrupt understanding and will. Out of the Christian's flesh continually proceed not only impure desires, but erring, foolish thoughts, corrupt, ungodly resolutions of the will. Also in the flesh of the Christian dwells nothing good. Their flesh is no better than the flesh of all the other children of men.

For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. The desire to do good is there; but when he looks for the result of this desire, he finds none. This does not mean that the believer only has an inactive desire, but that even in his best deed, since it is contaminated with sin, he does not perform the deed which corresponds to the will sanctified by the Spirit. This statement the apostle explains.

Verse 19:20:

For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. As the desire to do good is not altogether inactive, so the doing of the evil also involves the inner acts and emotions of the corrupt, carnal will. From the fact, however, that I do what I would not follows that it is not my real self which does what is evil, but sin that lives in me. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. In the conflict between the spiritual ego and the carnal ego the first prevails and predominates. The renewed ego is the Christian's real ego.

Verse 21:

I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. I would very much like to do good, but the evil is so close to me and contaminates all my deeds. The apostle has said that before, but now he stresses that his experience is no exception but the rule, is his daily experience.

Verse 22:

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. The inward man is the inner side of man - thoughts, intention, emotions and experiences. However, since joy in the law of God is ascribed to the inner man, since the inner man is contrasted to flesh and sin, it appears that inner man is identical with the new man. In conversion man's heart, understanding and will, above all, are renewed. Eph. 3, 16; 2 Cor. 4, 16. Therefore, according to the inner or new man, Paul and every one who is converted have hearty delight and joy in the law of God, because it is God's, is spiritual, divine, and reveals God's unchangeable, holy will. And how willingly he is to fulfill the law in all its parts!

Verse 23:

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. This is the other side. Paul is

conscious of another law, different from the law of God. And this other law he calls a law in his members. Members are simply the members of the body. The law in his members the apostle defines as the law of sin. The law of sin is sin itself, as rule, inasmuch as it seeks to control man's activity. Sin does not have its seat and root in the body and its members but in man's heart, reason and will. That is also true of sin which dwells in the believing Christians. Their heart, mind, reason and will are not completely renewed. But the corrupt mind and will, which the converted still have, are powerful and active in the members of the body, desire to take possession of the members and force them to do evil. Every day the Christian experiences how his members incline towards sin, how by secret power they are drawn to evil. And therein he perceives the law of sin.

Of the law of sin, of the law in the members, the apostle says further: "Warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." As he is just about to fulfill God's law, in which he delights, he sees that other law, as an armed enemy, going out to battle against him, obstructing his way and with all power preventing him from doing good. The law of sin opposes and wars against the law of God, for sin is the ungodly inclination of the will, but at the same time, "the law of my mind." Mind coincides with the concept "inner man," comprehends the entire inner life of man: thoughts, inclination, feeling, but according to the context designates the thoughts, inclination, feeling renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of God. The law of my mind is my mind itself, inasmuch as it is the rule which seeks to determine my activity. As far as he is born again and spiritually minded, the converted is unto himself law and norm. He has God's law and will, in which he delights, in his heart, and desires only what God wills and what pleases Him. However, the law of sin opposes that. There is a heated conflict. And the result is that the law of sin retains the upper hand in the members, takes me captive, forces me to do its will, and also presses my members into the service of sin.

Emphatically the apostle closes the description of this mighty conflict and impresses the Christian readers with the might of the adversary, with whom they must deal as long as they live upon earth. The law of sin takes us captive into its service. This is the same as being sold under sin. The impossibility of ever throwing off sin and attaining perfect sanctification Paul and every converted person consider to be bondage. A believing Christian fights unceasingly, opposes sin when it goes out to battle against him. He does not surrender in battle, feeling and being convinced that he in this life will not become lord over sin. He is not satisfied with a certain measure and degree of sanctification, knowing that he will never attain the final and highest degree. He strives and struggles for complete victory over sin, for perfect sanctification, again and again conquers evil with good and continually improves in his spiritual life. But he is never completely victorious, so that sin can no longer harm him. He cannot withdraw himself - the desires and thoughts of his heart, the members of his body - altogether from sin's influence and power. In that respect he is and remains his whole lifetime a captive of sin.

The apostle is finished with the theme of the section: Christian sanctification as a conflict with sin. We may call this his discussion, in which he speaks of indwelling sin, the penitent confession of Paul and all saints. And this penitent confession dies out in a cry of lamentation and a cry for help.

Verse 24:

The cry of lamentation: O wretched man, that I am! The converted experiences the bondage of sin to be the greatest misery, the greatest distress upon earth. The cry for help: Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? A Christian knows his Savior and Redeemer and knows that He will finally redeem him from all evil and so also from the sin that still clings to him. Oh, if only the hour of redemption would come soon! A Christian longs for deliverance from this body of death, from his own mortal body, which belongs to death, which, because it is so weak and frail, is also such a weak and sickly organ of the Spirit and so easily subject to sin. He longs for the time when he can, in a glorified body and life, live and serve God freely and unhindered. Therefore, a cry of thanks: I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Paul and every Christian thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. This thanksgiving would have no tolerable sense if it were not immediately added why and for what reason a Christian thanks God.

So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. These words contain a short recapitulation of the entire discussion; yet this recapitulation is so constituted that one realizes how a Christian, who laments over and wishes to be free from this present state, has yet occasion, on the other hand, to thank God for it. It is worthy of thanks that the Christian with his renewed nature serves God and His law, even though with his flesh he serves the law of sin. A Christian should, therefore, in his present misery of sin never forget what he as a Christian is and has and thank God through Jesus Christ, his Lord, to whom he owes this his present and ever so blessed Christian life.

Chapter 8

Spiritual life

1 - 17

Verse 1:

Paul dwells further upon the theme of the Christian's sanctification and places it under the aspect of the life and walk in the Spirit. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For those who are in Christ, for the believing Christians, there is no judgment of condemnation. Since Christians serve the law of sin with the flesh and daily sin much out of the weakness of their corrupt flesh and blood, the thought comes to them, that they by continuing to sin heap wrath and punishment upon themselves. The apostle, however, gives them the assurance that they need fear no judgment because of their sins of weakness. They need not fear because they serve God's law with their real self, with their renewed mind and will, because they have pleasure in God's law and, on the other hand, hate and abhor

evil. God judges Christians according to the new man, not according to the old man, and does not lay to their account what evil the flesh does. That the Christian still has the flesh, in which sin rages, does not damn him, because his spirit, mind, will, are born again, are just and good and fight against sin. The Christian's sins of weakness are damnable in themselves. Christians with their best works, with their piety and sanctification, cannot stand in God's judgment. Christians must continually look for forgiveness in Christ's blood and wounds.

Having given his instructions concerning sin and grace, the apostle presumes this to be known and self-evident. He is now concerned with sanctification. Thus he assures Christians, who are troubled because of their imperfections and their inability to do good, that God regards their new disposition and will, that He accepts the good will for the deed and does not consider what the flesh does to the contrary. God, reconciled by Christ, looks upon pardoned, justified sinners, believing, converted Christians, as though they were altogether spirit, as though they had no more flesh. That is why the apostle calls the Christians those who are in Christ Jesus, those who live and move and exist in Christ.

Verse 2:

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. The apostle illustrates by his own experience what all Christians have experienced. The law of the Spirit is the Spirit Himself, the Spirit of God, inasmuch as He determines man's conduct. And the law of sin is sin itself, inasmuch as sin determines man's conduct. The law of sin is also called the law of death, since sin leads to death those who serve it. The Spirit is the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus. The Spirit of God mediates the life of Christ. God's Spirit, thus every Christian confesses with Paul, has given me life, which is in Christ Jesus, so that I now am and live in Christ Jesus, and has freed me from the law of sin and death, to which I was subjected by nature and birth. Therefore, the norm for my conduct is no longer sin but the Spirit.

This deliverance by the Spirit is identical with that act of God which marks the beginning of our Christianity, 6,3, that we in baptism have died with Christ unto sin and have become partakers of His resurrection, of the new, spiritual, divine existence in which Christ now lives. It is especially the office and work of God's Spirit, through Word and Sacrament, to apply Christ's work and benefits to the individual.

Verse 3:

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. God sent His own Son, begotten of His own essence, into the world. Gal. 4,4; John 10,36. God sent His Son in the likeness, in the form of sinful flesh, so that He appeared in an outward form of existence, similar to the sinful human nature. He was revealed in the flesh, in the human nature. 1 Tim.3,16. He was without sin, Hebr. 4,15; yet His human nature was like the sinful flesh of mankind, inasmuch as it was also subjected to the weaknesses and frailties

which are the results of sin, and so also to death. God sent His Son on account of sin. Christ by His life, suffering and death in the flesh should atone for and destroy the sins of men - which He indeed did.

Through Christ then God condemned sin in the flesh. Through Him God broke sin's power. God condemned sin which has its seat in and rules man's corrupt nature. Man by nature and birth was under the jurisdiction of sin. But God took from sin this right to keep man in its dominion. He freed man from the jurisdiction of sin. This was done once and for all in Christ for the benefit of the entire human race. God sent His Son in the form of sinful flesh to atone for sin. In this way, through Christ's life, suffering and death, He atoned for the guilt of sin, redeemed men from the power and dominion of sin.

Verse 4:

God condemned sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. It was God's will that we should fulfill the righteousness of the law, its legal demands. And the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. We Christians walk not after the desire and impulse of the flesh but follow the impulse of the Spirit. The Spirit incites us to do what is right and good before God, to do what God demands of all men in His law. For this the condemnation of sin in the flesh was necessary. By redeeming us from the power and law of sin, Christ brought it about that we now fulfill God's law and live not after the flesh but after the Spirit. What God did in Christ the Spirit of God was made our's. The Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, freed us when we became Christians, through baptism in Christ's name, from the bonds of sin, from the law of sin and death. Now He lives in us, teaches us to do according to God's good-pleasure, and leads us on the right path.

The impotence, the weakness, of the law was not that it could not redeem us from sin. Its weakness was that it did not help us to fulfill the law. The law did not have the power to induce man to live according to the law, because it was hindered by man's sinful flesh from attaining its purpose. And so God, by condemning sin in the flesh through His Son, made possible what was impossible for the law.

That we Christians do not walk after the flesh but after the Spirit shows that the Spirit has really freed us from the law of sin and death. That is the reason why there is no more judgment of condemnation for us. We with our real ego serve God's law and walk after the Spirit. The converted, out of the weakness of their corrupt flesh and blood, indeed daily sin much and serve the law of sin, even though unwillingly, because the flesh clings to them all the days of their life. But the flesh does not govern their life and conduct. They walk after the Spirit. The Spirit of God predominates in them and determines their deeds. Their walk thus coincides with God's law, though their fulfillment of the law is not perfect and their deeds fall short of what they desire to do. Because the Spirit rules in them, God does not reckon to them the weaknesses of their flesh after Christ atoned for all the sins and transgressions of men.

Verse 5:

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. The carnally-minded are inclined towards the things of the flesh, in both thought and desire. The things of the flesh are the interests and works of the flesh. Gal. 5,19. The thoughts of the carnally-minded are concerned in satisfying the lusts and desires of the flesh. Gal. 5,24. The spiritually-minded, on the other hand, are inclined towards the things, works and fruits of the Spirit. Gal. 5,22. From nature and condition follows the intention, and the intention reveals itself in work and conduct.

Verse 6:

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. The thoughts and desires of the flesh in the final analysis, point towards death, inasmuch as carnal enjoyments finally bring man death. Those of the Spirit, however, are unto life and peace. Life, in contrast to death, is eternal life, and peace is perfect salvation. Being spiritually minded is not the cause of life and salvation. Spiritual life, however, does finally end in eternal life. So flesh and spirit are as far separated from each other as death and life.

Verse 7:8:

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. Enmity against God is the real disposition of the flesh, the root of all carnal intention. The carnally-minded contrive the works of the flesh because they are evil and offensive to God. They show their hostile disposition to God by not subjecting the flesh to God's law. For it is not subject to the law of God. When the law forbids natural man and punishes carnal lusts, the flesh rises up and opposes God and His will with all its powers. Neither indeed can be. According to its very essence and nature flesh cannot be subject to God's law. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Those who live in the flesh, who are hostile to God and oppose His law, cannot please God but rather draw His displeasure, wrath and also death upon themselves.

All manner of syndergism, also the newer theory that natural, unconverted man has the free will to decide in favor of God and Christ, or with the help of so-called prevenient grace to forsake malicious opposition, is denounced by the Word of Scripture: "The carnal mind is enmity against God," as a lie. For such an ability would presume a neutral attitude and the use of this ability a certain friendship toward God in unconverted man. No, natural man opposes God, no matter how He reveals Himself to man; he opposes the law as well as the Gospel of God. He cannot do otherwise. His nature will have it no other way. Only God through His creative power and grace can change the direction of the natural will. And that God does when He converts the sinner. Out of the unwilling He makes willing, out of enemies, friends. As soon as opposition has abated somewhat, as soon as man inclines himself toward God and His Gospel, he is then converted. But as the converted still has flesh, there is in him also the natural perverse disposition; and the Christians's conflict with his own flesh and blood is really a conflict with his inborn enmity against God.

Verse 9:

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, you live and move in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. God's Spirit, through whom Christians are born again, lives in them -He Himself personally, not only with His power and work. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. The apostle refers to the pretended Christians. Many a one makes the claim that he belongs to Christ, yet is no Christian since he does not have the Spirit of Christ. In these words lies an earnest invitation for all Christians to examine whether theirs is the true Christianity. The Spirit of God is called the Spirit of Christ, because He, as from the Father, proceeds from and is sent by the Son, and because He applies Christ's work and benefits to the individual. Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. 1 John 3,24.

Verse 10:

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit and with Him Christ are in you, as in the case with all believing Christians, then is the other true that the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit life because of righteousness. The body is dead. Our body is like a corpse. The body is already dead during the time of life, since it conceals the germ of death and dies from day to day until death swallows up life completely. This has its cause in sin. Because of sin the whole human race is subject to death. And Christians are not exempted from this fate through the new birth. As all children of men, they must die.

The spirit, however, is life because of righteousness. Spirit, in contrast to life, is the human spirit, the inner side of man's existence, which consists of body and soul. Life, in contrast to the death of the body, is immortal life. According to their spirit Christians, in whom Christ and His Spirit live, share in eternal life, already have a foretaste of eternal life. The Spirit of God is the first-fruit of the future world. But this life has its basis in righteousness, the perfect righteousness in Christ. Christians through faith have become partakers of the righteousness which avails before God and of eternal life. The certainty of salvation is based on Christ's righteousness and not on the individual's imperfect sanctification.

Verse 11:

But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. God will make alive our mortal bodies. He will free them from death and translate them into the life of glorification. 1 Cor. 15,23.35ff. God, who will make alive our mortal bodies, raised up Christ from the dead. Christ is the Mediator of salvation. Christ died and rose for our benefit. He is the First-born among those who are asleep. 1 Cor. 15,20. In that He arose and entered the life of glorification, He prepared for us resurrection and the life of glory. We should share in His resurrection, in His glory. Our perishable bodies should become like unto His glorified body. Phil.3,21. Our resurrection and glorification have their basis in His resurrection from the dead. And so God, who raised up Christ from the dead, will certainly also make

us partakers of life and immortal existence. Our spirit is already life. And so God, who has given His Spirit into our hearts who, has already begun to quicken our bodies, will certainly complete His work and at that time make alive our mortal bodies, lead us into that life in which the glorified Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, now is. The beginning guarantees the end. That God raised up Christ from the dead confirms our resurrection. The pledge of our resurrection is the Holy Spirit, whom the exalted Christ has given us.

Verse 12:

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. Natural man imagines that he is bound to satisfy his flesh. That means also the Christians, as far as the flesh still clings to him. Christians, however, should know that they owe the flesh no consideration or obligation. If they were debtors to the flesh, it would necessarily follow that they live according to the flesh in all things. Against that Paul wants to warn the Christians.

Verse 13:

In order to discourage the Christians from a carnal existence and life, he points to the fatal results of a conduct and life according to the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die. That is the lot they will not escape. Christians should not suppose that it would do them little harm, because they are Christians, to let the flesh do as it pleases. No, if they fall back into the service of the flesh, they, as all servants of the flesh, have nothing else to expect but death and destruction.

But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. The life of the Spirit shows itself, above all, in the mortification of the flesh. By the power of God's Spirit, which is in them, Christians can and should mortify the body with its members. If the flesh wishes to stir up body and members, then the Christians should by the power of the Spirit step in immediately and nip in the bud what the body is doing. Thereby they mortify and crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Gal. 5, 24. If they do that, they will live and receive eternal life. To live after the flesh brings death. On the other hand, mortification of the flesh is the way to life. To be sure, under all circumstances eternal life is and remains a free, unmerited gift of God, which becomes our's only for Christ's sake. However, if we live and walk after the flesh, if we fail to mortify the flesh, then we lost this gift.

Verse 14:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Only those who have the Spirit are Christians. The Holy Ghost, who lives in the Christian's heart, is never idle but always active. He drives, leads and rules the Christians. Wherever mortification of the flesh is found, there especially the Spirit is at work. He moves the Christians, draws and keeps them from evil, from the works of the flesh, and drives them to every good work. The Holy Ghost works all good in the Christians. But this working and driving of the Holy Spirit is no coercion and compulsion. He operates through the renewed will of the converted.

And so one can attribute these works of the Spirit also to the Christians. The Spirit is and remains the motivating agent. Moved and driven by the Spirit of God, Christians war against and conquer sin and flesh and with joy do what is pleasing to God.

Those who are thus moved by God's Spirit are sons of God. We Christians are and are regarded by God as children. God is and shows Himself to be our Father. We are through faith in Christ justified before God, so that God has hearty pleasure in us. Or, we through faith in Christ Jesus have become God's children. Gal. 3, 26. Or here, those whom the Spirit leads are children of God

Verse 15:

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption. As many as are led by the Spirit of God are truly God's children. For the Spirit, who drives and moves them, is the Spirit of adoption. If He were the spirit of bondage, then Christians would have to stand in fear of God, as before when they were under the law. But no, God's Spirit, who is in the Christians, is not a spirit of bondage, but a Spirit of adoption.

God's Spirit is called the Spirit of adoption for it is through Him whereby we cry, Abba, Father. We Christians cry Abba Father. As often as we draw nigh and pray unto God, we speak with all assurance: Abba, dear Father! The Aramaic name of God, Abba, has gone over into New Testament prayer-language. Their ardent feeling for the adoption urged the Hellenic Christians to repeat this word in its original. That we pray to God as to our dear Father, we do by virtue of God's Spirit. The Spirit, whom we have received, compels and drives us to prayer, and just to such child-like, confident prayer.

Verse 16:

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Our spirit, which cries Abba Father, is not the witness that maketh the adoption certain, but it is assured of the adoption in that it receives from another a greater witness. It is the Spirit of God alone, who bears powerful witness, who gives the divine certainty that we are God's children. He is the Spirit of God's Son, who won the adoption for us. Gal. 4, 6. The witness of God's Spirit is altogether independent of our own deliberations and feelings.

This witness of the Spirit is mediated through the preaching of faith. Gal. 3, 25. The preaching of faith, the Gospel of Christ, proves to us in many ways that we are God's dear children, that God's paternal heart is always open to us. And His Spirit makes this Word living in our hearts, Himself speaks through this Word, and persuades and convinces us that we are really and truly God's children.

Verse 17:

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together. Children, according to divine and human law, are heirs, have claim to the possessions of their father and will receive them at the proper time. God's children are His heirs and have claim to the blessings which He has intended for His children. And joint-heirs with Christ: they will

receive the inheritance which Christ, their first-born Brother, has already received. And this blessing is eternal life or the heavenly glory, into which Christ has gone. However, Christians will only then partake of Christ's glory if they beforehand suffer with Christ, willingly and patiently take upon themselves all hardships which befall them for Christ's sake.

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Verse 18:

Patient suffering is also a part of sanctification, of spiritual life. The apostle encourages Christians willingly to take upon themselves the cross of Christ. For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. The apostle calls the sufferings endured by Christians for Christ's sake sufferings of the present time. The present time, the time of suffering, is a rapidly passing, short period of time. That already is a comfort for suffering Christians. 1 Pet. 1,6. If one places the suffering of this time into one scale of a balance, the future glory into the other, the first will rise high into the air.

The sufferings of the present time are of no importance, of no account, in comparison with the glory which will be revealed in us. For that is an eternal, boundless, unspeakably great glory. This glory now exists in Christ. He on that Day will come again in all His glory. And this glory, which is yet hidden but will be revealed on that Day, is destined for us; we will share in the same. We will be glorified with Christ. That is what Paul Himself reckons. He had worked and suffered more than all the apostles, but in his severe sufferings he had a deep insight into the promised glory and was greatly comforted. 2 Cor. 1,11.12. So from experience he knew what the cross of Christ was and could, therefore, pass such judgment and summon his readers to verify whether his evaluation of Christian suffering was not right. 2 Cor. 4,17.

Verse 19:

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestations of the sons of God. In this poetic passage the apostle personifies the creature, or what we commonly call nature, in that he ascribes to it a waiting; and then in order to strengthen his statement, he personifies this waiting. The creature waits in earnest expectation, that is so to speak, with outstretched neck, looks into the future with suspense and longing. The irrational creature or nature looks with expectation for the revelation of God's children as an event decided in its favor.

Verse 20:

For the creature was made subject to vanity. The creature was subjected to vanity, to perishableness. Everything earthly disappears, blooms for a short time, fades, withers, and then becomes dust. Everywhere we have evidence of death and destruction. Everything gives nature a gloomy appearance. There are plagues of unfruitfulness, the fury of the elements, the destructive force of wild animals. It was not thus at the beginning. Coming from the creative hand of God, the creature had in itself the force, the power and the law of life. But something soon happened that changed

the original status of things. And since then the creature has been subject to vanity.

Nature was subjected against her own will, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because another wanted it thus. God, the Lord of the creature, was the one who subjected the creature to perishableness. Paul has in mind God's judgment in Gen.3,17: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life."

Man had sinned knowingly and willingly, had wanted the evil which God had expressly forbidden, and thereby willed his death and destruction. And because of man God also subjected the creature to the curse of death and destruction. Yet there was and is hope for the creature. In that God pronounced sin's curse also upon the creature, let guiltless nature suffer with guilty man, He had fixed His eyes upon a future change in this inconsistency, so that the suffering creature could hope for a change and an improvement in its condition.

Verse 21:

What the creature has to hope for is this: Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. This is the change the creature will experience. The creature itself, as the children of God, will be freed from the bondage of corruption, or destruction. Subjected to vanity, the creature was in a state of bondage, since general disappearance and destruction were unnatural for it. From this state of bondage the creature will be translated into the opposite condition. It will be delivered into the glorious liberty of God's children.

When Christ will come again in His glory, the children of God will share in His glory. And when the children of God are glorified, then have they attained perfect liberty. Their glory is, at the same time, liberty. They will then altogether follow their own inclinations, the inclinations of the new, divine nature, which they received in conversion. With free, joyful spirit, unmolested, unhindered by sin, weakness and death, they will serve their God and Father and with all powers of body and soul honor and praise God in all eternity.

And the creature will share in the liberty and glory of God's children. As it now bears the disgrace and curse of sinful men, so it will then be glorified together with perfect, glorified men. All traces of death and perishableness will be removed. The creature will be revealed as a creature of God, It will live and be active according to its own inclination, according to its own nature in the service of God, its Creator, and will reflect more purely and more beautifully than in the beginning His honor and glory. This great change, which the creature will experience, implies the continuation of the same beyond the end of the world.

(Dr. Stoeckhardt and others maintain that this passage does not contradict such Scriptural passages as 2 Pet.3,10-12; 1 Cor. 7,31. They are of the opinion that the passing away of the world is only the passing away of its outward form, and that the

fire of which Peter speaks is not an all-destroying but only a purifying fire. From this world-conflagration, from the atoms into which heaven and earth have dissolved themselves, there will come forth a creation rejuvenated and glorified, "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Pet. 3,13.)

Verse 22:

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. Here too Paul personifies the creature. A real, conscious waiting, hoping cannot be ascribed to the irrational creature. By this poetic description of nature Paul has in mind the fact that there is a great change, a glorious future, in store for the creature. That is a truth which God has revealed in this passage through His apostle to the suffering Christians, who need comfort. And also this portion of divine truth we must simply accept in faith. However, we can notice a little of this if we look at nature.

We know, thus writes the apostle, we can observe ourselves, that the whole creation sighs and groans since it was subjected to vanity. We see the vanity and corruption to which the creature was subjected. In whatever direction we turn we note how creation struggles against destruction and experiences pain. The worm cringes in the dust when it is trampled under foot. The animal writhes in pain and growls under the slaughter-knife. He who listens to and understands nature's utterances perceives everywhere either a loud cry of lamentation and pain or a muffled whining, groaning and sighing. And we should know and believe that the creature longs to be delivered from its misery and corruption and looks ahead for a better future, for the glorification of God's children. That all creation awaits this is proof for the greatness of this glory. Everything about us is striving for the same glorious goal. From that we can and should gather what a beautiful inheritance awaits us there.

Verse 23:

And not only they, but ourselves also. Not only the creature groans, but we Christians also. And we groan even though we possess the first-fruits of the Spirit. Which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. We Christians, who have the Spirit, possess in and with the Spirit, who originates from the other world, the first-fruits of the future world, of heavenly glory. We have, since the Holy Ghost lives in us, a part of heaven in our hearts. Eph. 1,14; 2 Cor.1, 22. Even though we have the first-fruits of the Spirit, we groan within ourselves. Out of the depths of our souls come forth groanings, which are often heard in cries of lamentation. We groan, as the creature, under the oppression of the bondage of corruption. We Christians are not Stoics. The sufferings of this time affect our heart. We feel the pain of death. This groaning, however, is, at the same time, a real conscious longing and waiting. What we await is the completion of the adoption. We are already children of God. The Spirit, which we have received, is the Spirit of adoption. Yet our outward condition does not correspond to our claim and position as children. The adoption is yet hidden, covered by the face of the cross. Therefore, we groan but yet await a change in this condition, await the revelation of the

of the adoption. We await the glory of God, which should be revealed in us and which will make us as His children. For that the creature also waits, for in its own way it will share in the liberty and glory of God's children. The apostle says that the adoption is the redemption of our body. We are waiting for that blessed hour when Christ will redeem our mortal body from the bonds of vanity and death, when our perishable body will be glorified like unto His glorified body. Phil. 3,21.

Verse 24:25:

We Christians are still waiting for the redemption of our body. The present is yet a time of waiting. For we are saved by hope. We are already saved; we share in salvation. Salvation has been prepared for us by Christ. Those who believe in Christ have eternal life. John 3,16. We have salvation, but yet in hope. It lies prepared for us in the future. But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? It lies in the very concept of hope that one neither sees nor enjoys for what he hopes. When seeing begins, hope comes to an end. Hoping and seeing exclude one another. But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Here in time we do not yet see but only hope. Salvation is the object of hope; therefore, we now wait. We Christians are dependent upon hope and so upon waiting. In that we patiently wait, we willingly bear all suffering. Waiting flows from hope. Christian hope, however, is certain hope, which already includes the blessing of hope, full salvation. This description of Christian life should compose the suffering Christians and make them content with their present lot.

Verse 26:

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. The Spirit takes an interest in our weakness. He assists us in our weakness. Indeed, weak are those whom the Spirit helps. They are not altogether deficient in life and energy, but they cannot get along by their own powers. They need the powerful assistance of a stronger One. Wherein our weakness consists and how the Spirit aids us in our weakness are explained in the following.

For we know not what we should pray for as we ought. We do not understand how to pray for the future blessedness as we should, as is proper. We Christians now groan. This groaning is a waiting and also a praying. We sigh, we long for the completion of the adoption, for the life of redemption. We ask and beg for it. From the depths of our hearts our groanings arise to God. We have the promise of the future glory. But we do not have an adequate concept of the glory which should be revealed in us. Our powers of comprehension are so weak and the promised glory so great that we cannot grasp it. Therefore, it is that suffering and pain oppresses us so, and often overpowers us, so that our glimpse into the bright and happy eternity is darkened. For that reason our praying in no wise corresponds to the great blessing for which we wait. We, indeed, sigh, pray: Thy kingdom come! Deliver us from evil! Lord, save us! This entreating, however, is still so weak, often so faint and listless, as though the salvation, for which we are praying, were a very small matter.

The faint sighing and praying is our weakness. But the Holy Spirit assists us in our weakness. But the Spirit itself

maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. The Spirit groans and pleads and intercedes for us before God. The Spirit does this in our hearts. From our hearts the groanings of the Spirit arise to God. We can feel and experience something of this groaning and longing of the Spirit in our hearts. Because they are the groanings of the Spirit, they are thus unspeakable, too sublime and profound for us. We well perceive them in our heart; we can distinguish them from our own; but we cannot put them into ideas and clothe them with words. The Spirit groans in and with us. His groaning is directed to the same object as our's, namely, to the liberty and the glory of the children of God. That He requests not for Himself but for us, And so with His groaning and praying He intercedes for us. He groans in us, with us, and for us. The Spirit has hearty compassion for our weakness. Humanly speaking, He cannot endure seeing the children of God, in whom He has made His habitation, treated so badly in this world. So He intercedes for them and asks God to give them the end of suffering, the glory.

With this His mighty intercession, incomprehensible yet perceptible to us, He, at the same time, supports and sustains our weak groanings and prayers, so that they do not altogether cease but finally attain their goal. Every believing Christian has experienced this help of the Spirit. When the cross presses severely, when we feel ourselves alone and forsaken, when we find no friend, no comforter, no person who really understands our troubles and burdens, when our prayers will not come forth properly, we experience in our hearts an undefinable, unspeakable lamentation, a powerful groaning and longing, which goes through the very marrow and moves the organs of the body, which tears us out of our miseries and permits us to taste of the powers of the future world. It is as though another, a Stronger One, takes hold of our unsteady heart and raises it up, directs it to God, so that we again look and pray to God more joyfully and trustfully. That is the assistance, the intercession of the Comforter, of the Holy Spirit. Even though we may not experience much of this, we know it from the apostle and we should believe that the Spirit of God lives in us and works, speaks, groans, prays, and with His groaning and praying intercedes for us, and will assist us until our last sigh.

Verse 27:

The Spirit intercedes for us with unspeakable groanings. God, however, understands them. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. He who searches the hearts and sees what is going on, understands what the Spirit wants and means by His groanings. He knows that the Spirit intercedes before God for the saints in a suitable manner. The Spirit does not intercede for the saints according to God's opinion, will and satisfaction -as the King James translates. For only of a man, of a Christian, but not of God's Spirit can it rightly be said that he conforms to God's will. "According to God" corresponds to "as we ought" in verse 26. We Christians do not understand how to ask and pray for future salvation and glory as it is fitting, as it is suitable for that great blessing. That for which we hope we cannot rightly grasp.

The Spirit, on the other hand, prays, asks for the glory in a manner suitable to God and His glory. The Spirit well understands what we do not. He well knows what our hope is. He is at home in that world. He Himself is God and knows and sees God's glory, which is also His own. In a manner befitting that, He intercedes for us. With holy, divine earnestness, as is proper for the immeasurable content of our hope, with the ardor of divine love He prays to God for us, groans and obtains for us divine glory.

God's Son, our Redeemer, is our Advocate. It is an "interceding according to God" when the Son says to the Father: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." John 17,24. In a similar manner, with similar words, the Spirit of Christ intercedes for them, in whose hearts He lives and whom He wants to prepare for salvation. The apostle designates the Christians, for whom He intercedes, as saints. The Spirit is zealous for those whom He sanctifies, in whom He has begun the new, spiritual, divine existence and life, so that they will be perfect. He claims, yes, demands of God the inheritance for the Christians is well known to God. He knows the intention of the Spirit. Such prayer is pleasing to Him and heard.

Verse 28:

Having pointed to the greatness of the future glory, the apostle adds a second characteristic of the glory, namely, its certainty. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God. All things, that also includes the suffering of the present time, serve the best interests of those who love God. For those who love Him God has prepared salvation, has promised eternal life. 1. Cor.2,9; James 1,12; 2,5. Our relation of love to God brings with it that God does everything for the welfare of those who love Him and endure all temptations, that he will finally give them eternal life and glory. Our love to God is never the basis of our salvation.

All things work together for good to them who are called according to his purpose. This term "the called" is always predicated to the believing Christians. God, who wills that all men should be helped and who has prepared salvation for all through Christ, calls to Christ through the preaching of the Gospel all who hear this preaching. He sends out His servants, the preachers of the Gospel; and they invite all, whom they are able to reach with their voice, to share in salvation in Christ. So all men who have heard the Gospel are called, in the sense of invited. Matt. 20,16; 22,14. Most men reject this call and invitation of God and do not obey the Gospel. Those, however, who follow His call, who receive the Gospel in faith, do it not to themselves. God works faith in them. God through the preaching of the Gospel, in which He offers them salvation, also calls them inwardly, takes their heart and will, puts the consent into their hearts, calls and brings them to Christ. Those who are called are, therefore, not only the invited but such as are brought to God through His call. God has called them unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ. 1 Cor.1,9. God has called them from darkness into His marvelous light. 1 Pet. 2,9.

The calling according to His purpose is the divine effect of grace, through which men are brought to faith. This effect of grace we must take in connection with the outward call. For through the Word God does this in them. This divine effect is identical with conversion. And by virtue of such a call, which has made them Christians, they have become such as love God. The final purpose of the call is the blessed goal which we Christians await. God has called us to eternal life, to His eternal glory. 1 Tim. 6,12; 1 Pet. 5,10; 2 Thess. 2,14. At our call and conversion when we became Christians, God placed future glory into our view; He directed our feet on the way of peace, which leads to eternal life. So through our call future glory and that all things also the sufferings of this present time, work together for good, are guaranteed to us. For God, who has called us, is faithful and will certainly fulfill the promise, unto which we were called.

The security for the attainment of salvation appears all the firmer and surer as it rests on a design and purpose of God. What is this design and purpose of God? According to the context, God designed to call, to convert, to bring to Christ and through Christ to save, to glorify with Christ, those who now love God, who are Christians. At this the call aimed. And the call is the fulfillment of this divine plan. The call is a historical occurrence which falls in time. The divine purpose, realized in the call, lies beyond time. It is the purpose which God conceived in His eternal counsel. Eph. 1,9; 3,11. This design is identical with eternal election.

We Christians should, therefore, know that God has ordained from eternity that and how He wished to bring us, to bring me, to Christ, to faith, to salvation. And according to that I have been called; I have been brought to Christ, to faith. So also certainly the final purpose of the call will be fulfilled in me; I will finally share in Christ's glory. For God's eternal purpose, in which my salvation is also comprehended, cannot fail nor be overthrown. What a man designs is often brought to naught. However, what God has determined that will certainly and without doubt be fulfilled. The design, by which we Christians are called to Christ and to eternal life, is that which "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," Eph. 1,11, the design of Him who accomplishes everything He has determined.

Verse 29:

Of the called, of the children of God, of those who are now Christians the apostle says: For whom he did foreknow. This foreknowing is an eternal act of God's will. Acts 2,23; 10,42; 1 Pet. 1,19. God in His eternal counsel thought of us in grace. He fixed His mind upon us, and so beforehand already made us His own. This foreknowledge is an eternal decree, an appointment of God. The persons whom God foreknew were not yet living at the time He foreknew them. At that time, in eternity, they only existed in the eyes, in the decree of God; and in this His eternal will He set them apart as His own, decreed and ordained that they in time should actually become His own in the way described above 1 Pet. 1,1,2.

Those whom He foreknew he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. "Foreknow" and "predestinate" describe the same eternal decree of God, but according to different angles. The first refers to God; the second refers to the

goal. In their outward form and appearance those whom God foreknew should be conformed -unto this God predestinated them- to the image of His Son, who through suffering has gone into glory, whose divine glory also shines forth from His bodily form and appearance. They should bear the image of the heavenly Man. 1 Cor. 15,49. Their perishable body should be glorified and be fashioned like unto Christ's glorified body. Phil. 3,21.

And the purpose of this: That he might be the firstborn among many brethren. In God's great family, in the mass of His perfect children, Christ should receive the position and honor of the Firstborn. He is the Captain of our salvation, who leads many to glory with Him. Heb. 2,10. This is the significance and tendency of divine predestination: a great host of blessed, glorified men which is gathered about the glorified Son of Man, the God-man. We who are now Christians are also predestinated to glory. God has firmly established that those whom He foreknew and chose for His own will also at that time see His glory and share in Christ's glory. Our future glorification rests upon the eternal decree of God, therefore, upon a firm, unmovable foundation. For that reason all things, also cross and suffering, must work together for our good, for our salvation and glory.

Verse 50:

Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified. Those whom God predestinated and foreknew, them He also called to Christ, drew to Himself, brought to faith. With call and conversion justification is granted. God has justified those who come to faith; He has received them as His dear Children. So those whom He before chose for Himself have in time actually become His own.

And whom he justified, them he also glorified. The glorification is yet in the future but cannot and will not fail to make its appearance. Future salvation and glory are guaranteed through justification. Eternal glory is the goal of the call. Those whom God has called and justified He will certainly also glorify, as He already in His eternal counsel had predestinated them to glory.

Thus the apostle mentions divine acts which are nothing else then the carrying out of His eternal decree. The foreknowledge of God has realized in the call and justification. The called and the justified are already on the way to glory. The predestination to glory will indeed be realized when the believing, justified children of God will be glorified with Christ. The decree and the execution of divine acts, are, in the presentation of the apostle, and also in reality, inseparably connected. And what Christians have experienced in time concerning the realization of the divine decree assures them all the more that the suffering of the present time serves and is conducive to their glory.

This passage, 8, 28-30, has always been regarded by the Church as the locus classicus for the doctrine of eternal election. It is first to be noted that the apostle speaks of God's eternal decree or the election of grace only after he has presented the chief article of Christian doctrine, the doctrine of sin and grace, of justification and sanctification. Only to those who have first been converted, justified and sanctified does he direct the will of God concerning their salvation. It is, therefore, not according to Scripture when predestination is made the basic principle, from

which one derives the entire Christian doctrine. The doctrine of election by grace is a special comfort for believing Christians, who walk in the Spirit and look towards the future glory. By them only is this doctrine rightly grasped, estimated and used. Further the apostle only knows of a predestination to eternal life and says nothing of a predestination to damnation. The latter is purely fiction. It is a fallacy to conclude the fate of those who are lost, the cause of damnation, from the predestination of which Paul speaks. The Biblical text gives no support for it.

The most characteristic point of eternal election or predestination is that it deals with definite persons. It concerns each and every person of the elect, concerns only the children of God. When Scriptures speak of the elect, of those whom God foreknew and ordained, we should think of the believing Christians and include ourselves in the number of the elect. And when Scriptures speak of the Christians, of God's believing children, we should identify them with the elect. To be sure, only those are elect who persevere in faith until the end and are finally glorified. But Scriptures throughout consider and describe the believing Christians as persons whose permanent characteristic is faith and who also receive the goal of faith, the salvation of their souls. So Luther in the exposition of the third article of the Apostolic Creed defines the Christian Church or the congregation of saints or believers as "the whole Christian Church," which the Holy Ghost "calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies ...and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith."

Experience teaches that many who have come to faith sooner or later again fall away. And Scriptures earnestly warn against apostasy and also speak of temporary believers. However, what is said to the temporary believers, is written on another page of the Bible. That is a truth for itself, which we should not combine with the Scriptural statements concerning the election of God's children to eternal life, which only deal with those persons who believe and will be saved.

Eternal election or predestination, which is concerned with definite persons, is because of that different, according to nature and concept, from the decree of redemption and the universal will of grace. The decree of eternal election includes that God foresaw before the foundation of the world, selected as His own, and destined to heavenly glory each and every person of the elect, those who are now Christians and love God, therefore, also us, also me, that He resolved to save just those persons and then also in time to lead them to the way of salvation, to call and to justify them. And this purpose of God cannot fail. According to this design He has called, converted and justified us; and He will finally also glorify us. Our call, conversion, justification, preservation are a fulfillment of God's eternal decree and purpose. In other words, the eternal election is the cause not only of our salvation, but of our call, conversion, and justification. Faith flows from the election, and not election from faith. Therefore, we Christians should reason backwards from our call, conversion, and justification to eternal election. In our call we should perceive the election and become certain that we also belong to the elect and will receive eternal glory.

The doctrine of election is highly comforting for Christians. If we are troubled about our salvation, then we should

know that God from eternity has taken our salvation and everything that belongs to it, also our faith, into His almighty hand. This doctrine affords special comfort for Christians in their cross and suffering. When the sufferings of the present time weigh heavily upon and oppress the soul, when it appears as though God has forsaken us, then we should say to ourselves that God already in eternity thought of us, regarded us in grace, and chose us for His own. When the cross becomes a temptation, when it appears as though God were angry with us, then we should say to ourselves that God from the beginning has only meant it well with us and has chosen and ordained us to an eternal glory, and that, therefore, all trying experiences of this life lead us to that goal, which God from eternity has firmly established. If we but keep our thoughts within the limits of Scriptures and rightly apply to ourselves and take to heart the comfort of Scriptures, then will we not think of others whose case is quite different, then will we experience no inclination to speculate with the great article of eternal election, and will remain safe from the dangers which such speculations of reason involve.

Verse 31:

The apostle continues: What shall we then say to these things? What follows? What does eternal election mean for the Christian? This follows: If God be for us, who can be against us? God is on our side. He can only be thus, since He has destined us to glory and has in reality carried out this determination. Therefore, no one can be against us. Paul does not deny that Christians still have enemies, who can yet harm them. "Who can be against us?" That is a triumphant question. Who will purposely rise up against us? Who can harm us? All hostile powers must be unavailing and harmless for us. Yes, since we have God on our side, no one can hinder our salvation. Enemies seek to dispute with us concerning our salvation. However, without result, for God, who has ordained us to glory, is for us. No one is able to do anything against God. God will not allow any one to tear salvation away from us.

Verse 32:

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? God spared not His own Son. That is the greatest proof of God's love. Christ was and is the real Son of God. He with right called God His Father. John 5,18. He was born of God's essence, His only begotten Son, and so was the beloved Son of the Father. John 3,16; Col.1,13. Him God did not spare, but gave Him up for us all, gave Him into death. Christ is the redemption for the sins of the whole world. But Christians are those who apply this love to themselves and say: "Christ has died for us; God gave His own Son into death for our welfare." Because God has done that, how should He not also with Christ give us all things? Christ is the greatest gift of grace. All others are supplementary. These cannot be wanting if one has received the first and greatest. Everything we yet expect of God, especially future salvation and glory, cannot and will not fail us, after God has done the greatest thing and has given us His Son.

Verse 33:

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who can and will accuse the elect? Christians do have enemies who accuse them. They are all hostile power, as Satan, the world and the flesh. The enemies accuse the Christians before God and confirm their accusation. Christians are not yet without guilt. We daily sin much against the law of God. These sins and transgressions Satan, the real accuser, brings before God's tribunal. Our fellowmen complain that we have often and grievously offended them. Our own conscience condemns us as guilty. However, these accusations are weak. For the apostle calls the accused the elect of God. He has chosen them from the world, from the lost masses. John 15,19. The accusations fall to pieces by reason of the God who justifies.

It is God that justifieth. Those whom God has chosen and ordained to glory He has also called and justified. Justification is a characteristic of the elect. God, who is the judge in this matter, gives no ear to the accusation against His elect but pronounces upon them an absolving judgment. He absolves them from their transgressions and forgives them all their sins daily and richly for His Son's sake, whom He gave into death for them as a propitiation for their guilt.

Verse 34:

Who is he that condemneth? Who is able to condemn the elect of God? The adversaries, who accuse us before God because of our continual transgressions, attempt to damn us by their accusation, to procure for us God's judgment of damnation. The accusation aims to condemn the accused. And certainly every sin, also of the Christian, is in itself damnable and excludes man from God and salvation. Nevertheless, the adversary does not reach his goal.

It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again. If Christ died for us only as a common man, then His death is of no value to us. Through His resurrection, however, He is proved to be God's Son and His death to be atoning and saving. Who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Christ now sits at the right hand of God; He has the same power, honor and Godhead as God. Therefore, when He intercedes with God for us, when He entreats for us when we sin, the goal of this intercession is certainly also reached. Christ's intercession is the continuous urging of His bloody merit before God.

All attacks of the adversaries are vain and idle. They with their complaints and accusations and condemnation can accomplish nothing against us; they cannot dispute our salvation, to which we were predestinated by God. The worst enemy of our salvation is sin, which still clings to us. It gives our adversaries occasion for accusation and condemnation. Yet, this proof of guilt is invalidated through Christ's death, atonement and intercession. So the final sentence in this process is that God, the highest Judge, declares and regards us as just. There the matter rests in eternity. To the righteous, however, belongs salvation.

Verse 35:

There are other powerful attacks which are aimed

directly at our person. These should also move God to deny us salvation. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Christ gave Himself for us, atoned for our sins, and ever intercedes for us. To Christ and His love we are joined through faith. Faith is the bond that unites us with Christ. Can any one separate us from Christ's love toward us? Is any one able to sever the bond of fellowship with Christ? Can any one destroy our faith? No, no one is able to do that.

In Spirit the apostle sees enemies arising who seek to take salvation away from the Christians. They accuse the Christians before God because of sin and demand that He damn the Christians. All their endeavors are fruitless. Salvation is and remains certain for the Christians, in spite of the accusations of the adversaries. So the latter seek to get at the Christians from another way. In Christ alone are righteousness and salvation. And Christ is our own; we grasp Him in faith. If faith fails, then fellowship with Christ and salvation are destroyed. Therefore, the enemies of our salvation attempt to separate us from Christ and His love, and so they press us hard with all might and power to throw away faith and trust in Christ.

Verses 35:36:

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Having spoken of our adversaries, the apostle now enumerates hostile powers. Christians experience tribulations for the sake of Christ. These the world brings upon the Christians; these the prince of this world arouses. Christians indeed experience these evils. That fact Paul confirms by a quotation from the Old Testament, Ps. 44, 22, where the Church of the Old Covenant complains: As it is written, For thy sake, that is, for God's sake, we are killed all the day long. At all times there are martyrs among us. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. That is the lot of the Church of all times. But all that cannot separate us from the love of Christ and lead us away from faith. We do not permit the saddest tribulation to obscure Christ's love.

Verse 37:

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors. Many seek to harm us. But we persevere and remain steadfast in faith, trusting in the love and grace of our Savior. We endure and conquer in faith the severest temptations and oppositions. Our faith is the victory which conquers the world. Not by our own power but through him that loved us. Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us, and who now sits at the right hand of God and governs all hostile powers, supports and strengthens His own, God's elect, by His mighty arm; and by His divine power He preserves them in His Word and faith. We so stand steadfast in faith that Christ preserves us in faith. Perseverance in faith is the work of the Lord.

Verses 38.39:

The certainty that sufferings and tribulations cannot separate us from the love of Christ rests upon the other certainty that nothing in the created sphere is in the position to separate us from the love of God in Christ. For I am persuaded,

says Paul. His conviction is not based on a special revelation. He merely says that he is certain for his own person -as every Christian should be- altogether certain that neither death, nor life, neither death by persecution, nor life with its vicissitudes; nor angels, nor principalities, nor the high spirits, who are stronger than all visible creatures; nor things present, nor things to come, neither the present which is often annoying, nor the more severe which the future may bring; nor powers, nor height, nor depth, no opposing fate from above and no power of the deep, no evil spirit, no power hostile to God; nor any other creature shall be able to separate me, or rather, in that the individual Christian includes himself with his fellow Christians, who have the same conviction, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Nothing in the whole world can and will sever me from the love of God in Christ, from God and Christ. Nothing can and will destroy our faith and trust in God. So we cannot fail to reach the goal which God's eternal counsel has ordained for us.

The certainty of future salvation includes also that a Christian can be sure that He will remain in the love of God and Christ, to whom He is joined in faith, that he will remain in faith. This certainty is founded upon God's eternal will and design. Those whom God has chosen and ordained to glory from eternity He has also called and justified; those He also preserves in faith and gives them the victory over all the enemies of faith.

It is a comfort for Christians to know that nothing in the whole world can deprive them of faith and salvation. This comfort is for all Christians, for there is no Christian who is not concerned about his salvation. The certainty of salvation is the opposite of carnal security. It is a certainty of faith. He who reckons thus: Today I stand in faith, but who knows how it will be tomorrow? I will make a shipwreck of my faith in the end before I reach the goal - he does not have Christian faith. Faith is sure of its goal. A Christian is sure that no one can disturb the goal and that he for his part cannot fail to receive it. He rests unconditionally upon the infallible, divine Word, wherein is revealed to him his eternal election and wherein God promises that He with His power will preserve him in faith unto salvation. This certainty does not come from flesh and blood; but it is, as faith itself, a wonderful work of God, a divine certainty wrought by God, which is lord over all dangers and dominates all fear and doubt.

Chapter 9

Israel of the Flesh and True Israel

1 - 13

Verse 1:

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not. Paul speaks the truth. He manifests his fellowship with Christ by speaking the truth, not only as an honorable man, but as a Christian and a servant of Christ. Thus every Christian in all he speaks and does manifests his Christian faith and relation to Christ. This ex-

Israel of the Flesh and True Israel, 1-13

Verse 1:

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not. Paul speaks the truth. He manifests his fellowship with Christ by speaking the truth, not only as an honorable man, but as a Christian and a servant of Christ. Thus every Christian in all he speaks and does manifests his Christian faith and relation to Christ. This excludes that Paul lies about what he is now going to say. Therefore, to strengthen the assurance that he speaks the truth, the apostle points to the testimony of his conscience. Everything a Christian speaks and does as a Christian is in harmony with his conscience. My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost. My conscience itself gives me witness how matters are with me. There is also an erring conscience. But Paul is certain that his conscience is ruled by the Holy Ghost, who lives in his heart. The testimony of his conscience, therefore is reliable.

Verse 2:

The apostle so holily and dearly assures that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. What incessantly pains and troubles him is this: For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. Paul's brethren and relatives according to the flesh, the Jews, are accursed. They have fallen under and are appointed to the wrath and curse of God. The Jews are under God's curse because they are excluded from Christ and salvation in Christ. It annoys the apostle that his own people are excluded from salvation, which he also praised in this letter and recommended to Jews and Gentiles. It troubles his heart so deeply that he wished he himself would be banned from Christ and condemned, instead of his brethren according to the flesh. If it were possible and proper, Paul would like to pledge his own salvation in order to save his brethren from damnation. The apostle does not directly speak the wish, for a Christian always keeps his desires within the realm of possibility and the limits set by God. But it is the earnest feeling of his heart that, in case it were possible, he would be ready to buy the deliverance of his brethren with his own salvation. Paul now enumerates the advantages of his brethren according to the flesh, from which one understands why he so ardently loves and is so deeply concerned about the exclusion of his brethren from salvation in Christ.

Verse 4:

Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.

Israel was Jacob's name of honor, and Israelites the Jews'. To the Israelites belonged the adoption. Israel was God's Son, Hos. 11,1; God's first-born son, Ex. 4,22.23; God's peculiar treasure above all people, Ex. 19,5. This adoption concerned the people as a whole and their relation to God as His people. To Israel belong the glory or the gracious presence of God with His people, which at the Exodus from Egypt and during the wandering in the desert went before them in the pillar of the cloud and fire and then settled in the holy of holies of the tabernacle and later of the temple. God lived in the midst of His people. This advantage, that Israel was God's people and God was their God, was already guaranteed by the covenants, which He had made with the fathers of Israel. He had made a formal covenant with the

patriarchs and promised them and their descendants that He would be their God. Israel had the law revealed solemnly from Sinai and in the revealed law the right form of God's will, while the heathen in the vestige of natural law only possessed an imperfect knowledge of divine will. Israel had the divine worship, service. They prayed to the true, living God and served Him as he wanted them to. God Himself had prescribed the right cultus for them. To Israel belonged the promises which pointed to Christ and salvation in Him.

Verse 5:

It was Israel's greatest prerogative that Christ, the salvation of the world, went forth from Israel according to the flesh, according to His human nature. Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God, blessed for ever. Amen. Christ is God over all. Christ, who is God over all, the blessed God, has taken from Israel the flesh and blood of men.

Many take this as a doxology to God the Father. The motive for this interpretation is unbelief, which is vexed at this frank and direct testimony to the Godhead of Christ. If Christ is the Son of God, He is also of God's essence. In countless passages Scripture ascribes to Christ divine names, attributes, works, and designates Him as true God. According to Scripture we must confess that Christ is God, even though this name were never used of Him. But Scripture does often directly and expressly call Him God. Already in the Old Testament in Is. 7,14ff. 9,6; Jer. 23,6; Ps. 45,6. In countless Messianic prophecies the Messiah is designated as the Lord Jehovah, who lives with His people. The New Testament passages in which Christ is called God are very clear and indisputable. John 1,1; 20,28; Luke 1,16; 9,43; Acts 20,28; 2 Thess. 1,12; 1 Tim. 3,16; Titus 2,13; 2 Pet. 1,1; 1 John 5,20. That the apostles usually call Christ the Son of God is because they present Him as the Mediator of salvation, as the Mediator between God and man, who has redeemed man and merited the righteousness which avails before God and made us children and heirs of God.

It cannot be denied that Christ is here called God. There is only one God, and this God is truly God in the full sense of the word. We Christians confess, according to Scripture, of the Father as well as of the Son, that He is the one, true God. And this God is God over all. That is the Son as well as the Father. This then is the Christians' attitude toward Christ. They confess that Christ is their Savior and Redeemer, their God and Lord, and in prayer say with Paul: Christ is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. Yes, only then, if Christ is God, the all-highest God, is He our Savior, only then are His blood and righteousness sufficient protection against the wrath of the Almighty.

The great advantages of Israel, that Israel was God's people and that Christ came from Israel, sufficiently declare that the heart of the apostle is inflamed towards his brethren according to the flesh and that he is so deeply concerned since they are cut off from Christ and are under the ban and curse of God. Jews and Gentiles should know how he, the apostle to the Gentiles, stands by his people, that he is not their enemy.

Therefore, he included this lamentation in his letter. At the same time, by his powerful confession of Christ, the blessed God, he opposes the Jewish blasphemies, which, since the days when the Jews called Christ a Samaritan and as one possessed of devils, were current among the unbelieving Jews, and which today are yet the sign of all deniers of Christ.

Verse 6:

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. That Paul's brethren according to the flesh are accursed from Christ is not to be understood as though God's Word had become invalid. This Word is the Word of God, which concerned Israel, God's promise that Israel should be His people and the possessor and bearer of the promise of Christ. This promise seems to contradict the present fate of the Jews. As it was promised, Christ went forth from Israel. Nevertheless, the promise, that Israel had, included also that Israel itself and Israel first should share in Christ's salvation, which was meant for all peoples, to be sure. Abraham, through whom all the peoples of the earth should be blessed, should also himself be a blessing. When Christ should come, "Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely." Jer. 23,6. And now Israel is accursed from Christ! However, God's Word has not become untenable. That the apostle proves.

Verse 7:

For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel. Not all who descend from Israel according to the flesh belong to the true Israel, the Israel according to the Spirit, the Israel of God. Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, according to flesh, are they all children, true children of Abraham and God. But, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. Gen. 21,12. After or according to Isaac shall your seed be called. The descendants of Abraham from Isaac, not those from Ishmael, should be Abraham's seed, to which belonged the promise. The descendants of Isaac are true children of Abraham and God. For the apostle has just said that not all who belong to Israel according to natural descent were true Israelites. But Paul introduces this word of Scripture only to point out which Israelites are true children of Abraham.

Verse 8:

That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. Not those who are born in the natural way but only those who are born contrary to the course of nature, according to promise, are regarded by God as Abraham's real seed.

Verse 9:

Isaac was a son of promise. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. Gen. 18,10.14. Isaac was born by promise. Gal. 4,23. God had given the promise to Abraham and Sarah in their old age, when their bodies were already dead, that they should have a son. And what He promised that He was also able to do and did. Isaac is thus a type of the children of the promise. Isaac, by virtue of the promise, was born in the natural way. The children of promise, whom the apostle has in mind, are born by the promise, by the

Gospel, in a spiritual way, are translated into a new, spiritual life and existence. God has created faith in them through the Word. Through faith they are born again. Thus believing Christians are the children of the promise, as was Isaac. Ga. 4,28. And the children of the promise, the believing, converted Israelites, are the true children of Abraham and God. They are not accursed from Christ but share in His salvation. So God's Word, which Israel had, has not become of none effect but in that respect has rather been confirmed and fulfilled. For from the beginning in the promise the blessings was connected with faith. Isaiah says: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone... he that believeth shall not make haste." Is. 28,16. The new covenant, which rests on the forgiveness of sins, has, according to Jeremiah, also this characteristic that the children of Israel will know the Lord. Jer. 31,34. Scriptures testify that Abraham, the ancestor of Israel, was justified by faith, and so is the father of all believers, also of the believing Jews, a father of the circumcision, not only of those who are of the circumcision but also of those who walk in the footsteps of Abraham's faith. To them righteousness is imputed; to them belongs the promised inheritance.

We must distinguish between the seed and the true seed of Abraham. The people of Israel, all bodily descendants of Abraham from Isaac, as from Jacob, were God's people. God had placed this people into a special relation to Himself. He had revealed Himself to this people and lived in their midst. Israel had a law. The whole community, all the public affairs of Israel were regulated by the law. To them belonged the promise. To Israel alone, to no other people, was the promise given, was the future Christ revealed in the promise. Christ came from the people of Israel in the fulness of time. Salvation has come from the Jews. It is wrong to restrict the prerogatives of Israel to the believing Israelites. They are rather characteristics of all Israel. From Israel according to the flesh, which includes all natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, however, the Israel according to the Spirit is to be distinguished. Only Israel begotten through the Word by the Spirit is the true Israel. Only the believing Israelites are regarded by God as Abraham's real children and God's true children and share in Christ's salvation; while all those Israelites, who are Israelites according to the flesh only, but not according to the Spirit and faith, are accursed from Christ. It is wrong to reckon among the enumerate advantages of Israel the salvation in Christ, the righteousness which avails before God, the eternal salvation. The promise pertains to all Israelites inasmuch as the promised Christ should and did take upon Himself flesh and blood from Israel, and inasmuch as in the promise and later in the preaching of the Gospel salvation was offered to all Israelites. The real children of the promise are only those who cling to the promise, who have applied to themselves Christ's salvation in faith.

Verse 10:

The apostle introduces a second Biblical example. And not only this; but when Rebeca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac. From Abraham, who had two sons, of whom he should only regard one as his seed, the apostle continues to Rebecca, the mother of two sons. Also Rebecca, who had conceived

of Isaac -who from the Jewish standpoint is also designated as our father- comes into consideration here. In the context Paul has shown that not all Israelites, who belong to the people of Israel by natural birth, are true Israelites, and which Israelites alone are true children of Abraham and God. For this reason he used the example of Abraham and his two sons; for this reason he also uses the example of Isaac and Rebecca and their two sons.

It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. There should be a difference between the two sons of Rebecca, as between the two sons of Abraham. The latter differed from each other according to birth and origin, in that Ishmael was born of the maid and Isaac of Sarah, the free-woman. Jacob and Esau, on the other hand, were equal as far as their birth was concerned, since both came from the legitimate marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, and, in addition, were twins. Nevertheless, already beforehand a different position was given to each of them. The greater will serve the lesser. The lesser will have the advantage over the greater.

The apostle points back to the story in Gen. 25, 21ff. Upon Isaac's entreaty Rebecca, who had been barren, conceived twins. "And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." Referred to are the two sons, who struggled in Rebecca's womb. The greater is the first-born or the older, and the lesser is the younger. But both sons come into consideration only as ancestors and representatives of the peoples descended from them. That statement of God was not fulfilled when David subjected the Edomites: who then for centuries remained subject to Israel. The Holy Record clearly shows wherein Jacob's advantage over Esau consisted. Jacob's seed, not Esau's, was the Israel, which received the prerogatives mentioned by the apostle. Jacob's people, Israel, was God's people, the heirs of the promise. To these advantages the firstborn's blessing, which God gave to Jacob and not to Esau, pointed.

Verse 11:

For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil. In that God said to Rebecca, "The elder shall serve the younger," He did not take into consideration the birth, the nature and natural quality or the conduct of the two sons. That the purpose of God according to election might stand. This is not the election to the Messianic salvation, to eternal life. It characterizes rather God's saying which Rebecca received. The Lord said unto her, "The elder shall serve the younger;" so that His electing purpose would be fulfilled and realized. In Jacob's call, announced to Rebecca, that eternal purpose of God was carried out. God in eternity had resolved to receive Jacob's seed as His people and to reveal to them His laws, customs, testimonies, had resolved that the salvation of the world should come from Jacob. This resolution was in the nature and condition of an election, in that God chose for the designated purpose the younger of Rebecca's two sons. According to this electing purpose God then revealed to Rebecca that Jacob, not Esau, should be the

ancestor of God's people, the heir of Abraham and Isaac, and should transmit the promise. From then on He made Jacob and his seed what He had from eternity determined they should be.

Not of works, but of him that calleth. The Lord said to Rebecca, "The elder shall serve the younger," not because He considered the works or the later better conduct of the younger, but because He is the One who calls. The motive is alone in God, who called Jacob to what he should and did become. Jacob's call lies in the words, which God spoke to Rebecca and which were also made known to Jacob. These words are, at the same time, Jacob's installation into his patriarchal office. Jacob's call was the result and realization of his eternal election. And so in his election, as in his call, there was no consideration of works, merit, and conduct.

Verse 13:

The apostle yet adds a word of Scripture which confirms the revelation received by Rebecca. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. Mal. 1,2,3. Nothing else is meant than the special love which God directed to Jacob, in that He made him the ancestor of His people and the heir of the promise. Esau, however, was not loved; he remained denied. The preference of Jacob to Esau is stated in Mal. 1,5: "The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel." Jehovah will show Himself to be great over the land of Israel. The prerogative of Jacob and his seed was that the true, living God, the Lord Jehovah, revealed Himself and His greatness to them. He received this people as His people, wonderfully lead and guarded them, and intrusted to them His Word, law, and promise.

The historical calling of Jacob and his seed was the content of God's word to Rebecca, the aim and object of Jacob's election and call, and does not deal with the final lot of Rebecca's two sons and their descendants, not with salvation and damnation. We believe that Ishmael and Esau were both finally saved. Both had taken along from their fathers' homes the right knowledge of God and also knew the promise, which Isaac and Jacob received. The story of Esau's reconciliation with Jacob gives the impression that Esau finally took the right attitude toward God and bowed to His will, which gave to Jacob the blessing of the first-born. We also believe that very many descendants of Ishmael and Esau were saved by God's grace.

The apostle wishes to refer this second Biblical example, as the first, to the question under discussion. That Esau was excluded from the lineage of promise points to that fact that not all Israelites, descended from Abraham according to the flesh, are true Israelites. Jacob, as Isaac, is a type of the true children of Abraham and God. This is the lesson from the example of Jacob: All Israelites, who - as Jacob and regardless of birth and origin, of works and conduct - were chosen and called according to God's free purpose, but who are now chosen and called to adoption and salvation in Christ, are the real seed of Abraham; they are God's children, who finally receive eternal salvation.

Divine Sovereignty and God's Saving Will

14 - 29

Verse 14:

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God loved Jacob and hated Esau. Of Isaac's and Rebecca's twins He preferred the younger to the elder, before they were born or had done good or evil. According to His free purpose God chose some in preference to others, who are no better and no worse, and then in time He called and converted them, without any regard for their conduct. That seems to be inconsistent with the righteousness of God, Righteousness, according to the usual human conception, demands the same treatment for all and that God rewards every one according to merit. The apostle rejects the question. God forbid.

The apostle points to a word that he Lord spoke to Moses. Moses had once asked a great thing of God: "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." Ex.33,18ff. And the Lord had answered: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." Paul adopts the Septuagint when he writes: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion, verse 15.

Verse 16:

God's grace and mercy rest alone in God, in His grace and mercy. And He directs this grace and mercy upon whomever He will. He is obligated to no one. God is gracious to whomever He will be gracious and because He is gracious. The Lord said this to Moses. That is important. One would expect the Lord to have answered Moses' request because of the fact that Moses was faithful in all His house. Num.12,7. Nevertheless, the Lord said that what He did rested alone in His mercy and in nothing else. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. The subject Paul has in mind is divine favor. That is in no wise dependant on man's effort but freely on God, on His mercy.

It is not unjust if God elects and calls whomever He will according to His free opinion. The apostle does not attempt to explain how this divine conduct agrees with the rule of righteousness. It is a very questionable theodicy if one attempts to justify God before the forum of human justice. The apostle merely introduces a word of Scripture, in which God Himself says that not only His mercy but the election of His individual objects are His own doings. Whatever God declares and does is in itself good and right.

Further, there is no unrighteousness with God according to the other side, with regard to those who experience His wrath and displeasure. The apostle argues in the same way as before. He quotes a word of Scripture, in which God shows what His will was concerning Pharaoh. He thereby presupposes that everything Scripture says is infallible truth and that God's will is at all times just.

Verse 17:

Paul writes: For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh. The word, that God spoke to Pharaoh according to Ex. 9,16, is introduced as the word of Scripture because here the apostle wishes to teach and prove by Scripture. The word of Scripture reads: Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee. "I raised thee up" does not mean that God provoked Pharaoh to opposition, or kept him alive, or raised him up, cured him from sickness, but simply refers to Pharaoh's historical appearance and position. God permitted Pharaoh to rise up, so that He could show forth His power in Him. He placed him in history as an example to manifest His power. This power, that he wished to show forth in Pharaoh, was His power of destruction. He had often said that He wanted to show Pharaoh His mighty arm and inflict His great judgments upon him. Immediately preceding the words quoted by Paul are the words: "Thou shalt be cut off from the earth." Ex. 9,15. When Pharaoh perished in the Red Sea with his chariots and riders, he experienced God's terrible power in its fullest measure. The reason for such a divine demonstration of power is given in the verse immediately following the quotation: "Thou exaltest thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go." Ex. 9,17. Pharaoh trod God's people, Israel, under foot and hard-heartedly refused to obey the voice of the Lord and let Israel go. This malice, this disobedience, was not of God. Evil does not come from God. Nevertheless, God does make evil, which He hates, serve His purposes and uses it to the glory of His name. And so He wanted to show obstinate Pharaoh His destructive power and glorify His name in him through His right of judgment and righteousness, He has presented Pharaoh as an example of His righteous punishment for all times and all peoples.

And that my name might be declared throughout the earth. God also wanted to glorify His name by delivering Israel by means of His outstretched arm and the great judgments which befell Pharaoh. Ex. 15,6. At Pharaoh's destruction in the Red Sea. Israel's deliverance from Egypt was won. And these great deeds of God, connected with the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt, first became known to the neighboring heathen, then, however, in the course of time, to the whole world through Scripture. In this way many men have been incited to worship the true, living God. One dare not overlook that God, when He shows His power and glorifies Himself through judgment and righteousness, at the same time, has the welfare of His people and the best interests of many souls in view. He does not desire death and destruction but life.

It is obvious that the apostle presents Pharaoh as an example of those in whom God shows His terrible power, without thereby denying His righteousness. Yet, it is well to note that the apostle adds no application to the word of God concerning Pharaoh, as he did to the word spoken to Moses. There it was said that it did not rest upon any one's desire or effort but alone on God's mercy. Here, on the other hand, we do not read that it does not depend on man's conduct or guilt but freely on God's wrath and displeasure. That would be an unscriptural thought and would oppose the whole context to which the quotation concerning Pharaoh is added. We know that God's demonstration of power in Pharaoh had its cause in his disobedience.

Verse 18:

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. That is what Paul gathers from the discussion concerning Moses and Pharaoh. Not the demonstration of God's might or judgment but the judgment of obduracy is contrasted to God's mercy. The opposite of hardening of the heart is conversion. As obduracy results in damnation, so conversion results in salvation. This special mercy of God, which converts sinners, has already been described. For the call, which makes men children of God, is nothing else than conversion.

It evidently was the example of Pharaoh which caused the apostle to speak of obduracy. Nowhere in Scriptures is obduracy described more in detail than in the story of Pharaoh. God has presented Pharaoh just as an example of obduracy. The last great deed of God's might and judgment upon Pharaoh, which destroyed him from the earth, was prepared through the judgment of obduracy. Yet, it is especially the context that leads the apostle to the subject. Through the entire historical discussion runs the contrast between true Israel and the Israel accursed from Christ. In the further course of the discussion just this fact is brought forth that the unbelieving Jews have fallen under the judgment of obduracy. Though the statement "Whom he will he hardeneth" is general in character, Paul has in mind especially the Jews, who had the same experience as Pharaoh. From the example of Pharaoh, therefore, one should learn what obduracy really is.

Obduracy is the first step of final wrath and condemnation. Where the obduracy of Pharaoh is mentioned for the last time, we read: "And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel," Ex. 14, 8, and thus went to his destruction. Obduracy is an act of God. God hardens the heart of man. Ex. 9, 12; 14, 8; 10, 1. This act of God upon man presupposes the self-obduracy of man. Five times it is related of Pharaoh that he hardened his heart, that he did not listen to Moses and Aaron and let Israel go. Ex. 7, 13, 14; 7, 22; 8, 15; 8, 32; 9, 7. In Ex. 9, 12 it is mentioned for the first time that God hardened him. Yet once more it is said that he hardened himself. Ex. 9, 34, 35. Now the judgment of obduracy, which God placed upon him, was a completed fact. It is mentioned five times yet that God hardened his heart. Ex. 10, 1, 20, 27; 11, 10; 14, 8.

According to this hardening of the heart on God's part appears as the divine reaction against human conduct, as the adequate punishment for self-obduracy. It is contrary to Scripture and blasphemous to deduce obduracy from an absolute decree of reprobation, which already previously excludes the rejected from the love of God, the redemption of Christ, and the grace of the Holy Ghost. Let us, however, look more closely into the example of Pharaoh and see how self-obduracy and obduracy take place.

With regard to those who finally harden themselves and as punishment are hardened by God, God left nothing undone in order to convert them. When God through Moses and Aaron demanded Pharaoh to leave Israel go and strengthened His word by signs and miracles, it was His earnest intention that Pharaoh should obey His command. When God's signs became severe plagues for Pharaoh and the whole land of Egypt, God wanted to instill in him a wholesome terror, that he might learn to fear and honor

the true God. And in that God, as often as Pharaoh gave in a little, desisted from punishment and again took away His plagues, through such leniency He wanted to soften Pharaoh's heart and move him to release Israel from his service and thus spare himself. God has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ez. 33, 11. God permits His Word to be preached to the godless, admonishes, reproves, calls and entreats them, so that they turn and learn obedience. Through His earnestness and goodness He wants to lead them to repentance. But what did Pharaoh do? Time and time again he hardened his heart against God's Word and works and stifled all impressions which His plagues and leniency made upon him.

Herein the self-obduracy of the sinner consists: He despises God's earnestness and goodness, stifles all impressions of the divine Word, and opposes the Holy Ghost, who testifies in his heart and conscience and earnestly desires to convert him. In the long run, however, the great God, who is absolutely earnest in His commands as in His saving grace, will not put up with man's opposition to His Word and to His good and gracious will. With the perverse He is perverse, and He hardens those who have hardened themselves. This does not mean that He effects and nourishes the perverse disposition in them. God never does evil. But He gives them room and freedom, so that their malice operates fully and unhindered unto the last bitter fruit.

To this belong two additional facts. God ceases to work in man, withdraws His Spirit and thus the possibility of conversion, and gives man over to his perverse, obdurate disposition and will and into the power of the devil, so that the latter can effect his work in him undisturbed. So God permitted Pharaoh to continue in his malice unto the every extreme, so that he not only held Israel fast but pursued them after they left contrary to his will. God hardens occasionally. That is clearly evident from Pharaoh's example. After all His efforts to turn proved vain, God continued to speak to him through Moses and Aaron. He permitted him to see greater miracles and sharpened His plagues and so gave him occasion to further obstinacy and opposition. God continually keeps His Word and work before the eyes of hardened sinners, which for them becomes a savor of death unto death. In this all, however, there is accomplished a righteous and terrible judgment of God. God hardens those who already have pronounced the sentence upon themselves.

Therefore, with regard to the motive there is a difference between divine mercy and obduracy that God inflicts. If God has mercy upon someone, calls and converts a sinner and in this way saves him, that in no wise depends on man's effort, desire and conduct, but rests alone in God, in His grace and mercy, already in His eternal grace. That Scriptures declare. God is gracious because He is gracious. And God is just in His doings, though they do not correspond to the weak human conception of righteousness. If God, on the other hand, hardens and finally damns someone, the cause lies alone in man, in his conduct and self-obduracy. Obduracy, which results in eternal destruction, is a well deserved, righteous, judgment of God, whose righteousness is also evident to the godless. This twofold matter we maintain according to Scriptures.

However, for pondering reason all difficulties and offenses are not yet removed. If we contrast both statements, that concerning divine mercy and that concerning obduracy, if we compare the objects of mercy and the objects of obduracy, we cannot understand why of the two, who are both by nature sinful and corrupt. God has mercy on one and hardens the other; why He gives the one into obduracy, brought about by his own fault, and converts the other, who is no better; why God lets the one continue in his opposition to the very extreme and takes it away from the other before he comes to self-obduracy and obduracy. Since in call and conversion the eternal election of God is reflected, the question why some are converted before others involves also the other question why some are elected before others. The apostle does not solve the difficulty. He does not justify God before human reason but refers simply to the will of God. The final argument here is: God has mercy on whomever He will, and hardens whomever He will. He showed His mercy to Moses, on the other hand, His power to Pharaoh, because He wanted it thus. God deals with the one and the other as He will. Therefore, we should be satisfied and believe that God's will is holy, good and just, in every respect. That God converts whomever He will and hardens whomever He will belongs to His unsearchable, gracious ways and His incomprehensible judgments, which we cannot grasp and fathom. Rom. 11, 33. Certainly, God has His wise and righteous motives. Yet, He has hidden these from us. First in the light of glory will we know them.

Again it is stressed that Paul knew nothing of a secret, absolute decree of reprobation by God. What he says of God's will, as far as he enters upon obduracy, does not involve such a degree and does not exclude God's universal gracious will. Also to those who are finally hardened it applies that God does not want the death of the sinner. God also offered them His grace, earnestly wanted to convert and save them. But they were not willing. And God lets happen what they want, finally surrenders them completely to their corrupt will. Permitting this to happen does not involve a weakness in God, nor does it happen without His Will, without which nothing happens on earth and which is always wise and just, even though we do not understand. It rests on God's will when He permits and endures evil, which He neither wants nor loves, which He in no wise causes.

The question why God converts some and lets others persist in their sins and malice, in their opposition to grace, and thus harden themselves is connected with the other more general question, namely, why God permitted Adam to fall, why He permitted evil. When we look into the world and see how God leads and rules individuals and peoples, how He deals thus with some and differently with others, we must shake our heads; we cannot harmonize that with God's righteousness and goodness. And then involuntarily such questions arise: Why does God lead some through His goodness to repentance, while we see others perish in misery and doubt? Why does He bring some through cross and tribulation to their sense and to repentance, while He entertains others with pure fortune, which makes them secure and wanton? Why does He so obviously interfere with some during their course of life and lead them contrary to their intention to the place where they hear the Word of their salvation, while He permits others to go their own way? Why does He take some through an early death to Himself in

heaven before they fall from faith, while others He does not hinder from falling away from truth and dying in their sins? Why does God let so many children die in the grace of baptism, while He lets thousands of others also baptized live, who sooner or later again lose the grace of baptism? Why does God in one place give upright teachers, who direct many to righteousness, in other places not? Why does God let His Gospel resound in one land clearly and purely in this and that period, while in other lands many generations after another are not moved by the sound of the Gospel? It is evident to every Christian that it would be pure impudence to ponder over these questions and attempt to answer them. We should be satisfied with the decision of the apostle in Rom. 9,18: "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth," and not ask and inquire why God wants it thus. Against the latter the apostle expressly warns the Christians in the following.

Verse 19:

The apostle now thinks of an adversary, who objects to what he has said. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doeth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will. These are the questions of a man who judges by himself and measures God and divine things according to his own thoughts. It is carnal reason which speaks and concludes thus: If this is the case that God hardens whomever He will, why then does He yet find fault? Then God no longer has the right to blame, reprove and punish hardened man. For who can oppose His will?

Thus natural reason argues: If obduracy happens with God's will and permission, if God allows unbelief, disobedience, and lets it continue unto the extreme, then He dare no longer reproach man. For man cannot possibly resist God's will, cannot possibly prevent obduracy if God does not stop it. The adversary is not interested in interceding for the guilt of the unbeliever. He agrees that God justly finds fault, punishes and damns an unbeliever, and through the fact that God reproves and reprimands purposes to show the incorrectness of what the apostle has said concerning divine hardening. For it is an unbearable thought for natural man that God has mercy on whomever He will and hardens whomever He will.

According to the apostle's tendency the antagonistic argumentation is a false conclusion. Scriptures clearly and definitely show and the conscience of man testifies that unbelief, self-obduracy, which results in the divine judgment of obduracy, is man's own deed, his own guilt, that God rightly holds man accountable, if he hardens himself against the offered grace. And this fact is not altered in the least by the other that God hardens whomever He will. For the will of God here concerned, which permits unbelief, disobedience, obduracy, lies on an altogether different plane, unintelligible to man, belongs to the secrets of divine world-sovereignty, with which we should not concern ourselves.

The fallacy in the argument is clearly evident if one generalizes it and refers it to the evil and the divine permission of evil. With equal right can and must one also then conclude: If God consciously permitted the fall of Adam and of Satan, there is no reproach for man, for the devil. Why did God not

prevent the apostasy? If God intentionally endures and permits evil on earth, He Himself is answerable for it. But since all evil is man's fault, it follows that one must let God's will and permission altogether out of the picture, that God is completely absent and ceases with His will, desire, works, as often as man does evil. That is a basically wrong and shameful conclusion.

Verse 20:

The apostle does not venture to refute the argument of the opponent, but simply asks: Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? If man, dust and ashes, attempts to dispute and reckon with God, attacks what He wants and does, and seeks to eject God from His world, He will experience to his terror that he cannot oppose His will. Divine majesty will dash to the ground him who seeks to dethrone it.

Verse 21:

The apostle continues, offering no special argument against his opponent's irritating statement. He simply maintains his point in that he refers to the right of the Creator over His creatures. Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it. Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Already in the Old Testament God, the Creator, was often compared to a potter, and the creature to clay. Is. 29,16; 45,9; 64,8; Jer. 18,6. Paul does not here quote this or that Scripture passage but simply alludes to such prophetic statements and applies the picture already used in the Old Testament to his own purpose.

A creature will never complain to its creator for making it and giving it its form. To the potter is not given the authority and ability to form the clay into vessels but the full authority, the right of the potter to give to the vessels he makes their various forms and figures corresponding to their different usage and employment. A potter has the right to make one vessel to honor and another to dishonor. God, the Creator, has the right to dispose of His creatures as He pleases. The almighty Creator is sovereign over against His creatures, and has the right to fashion their fate as He desires, some unto vessels of mercy, others unto vessels of wrath. In the latter case, no creature has the right to complain over its lot. In other words, God, as Creator and Sovereign, has the right to have mercy on whomever He will and to harden whomever He will, namely in the sense stated above.

The opponent should well consider that he by his opposition and corrupt human reason insults God's right of sovereignty. This is also a warning against that theology which goes beyond bounds and with its small, darkened light of reason seeks to reveal and explain all secrets in heaven and earth and rashly rejects everything that does not fit into its narrow scheme. At the same time, the truth in these verses contains a direction for believing Christians and especially also for Scriptural and believing theologians. They should be careful concerning the boundary where divine revelation ceases and the secrets of God begin. In Scripture it is clearly revealed that the only cause for con-

version and salvation is God's grace and mercy, and that the only cause for obduracy and damnation is man's evil will. With all diligence one should extol and inculcate this twofold truth, which serves to the benefit of souls. Further, Scripture, as in Rom. 9, 14-21; 11, 33-36, also speaks of an unsearchable will of God, of unsearchable divine secrets, which God has reserved for His wisdom, and that the discretion of persons is such a secret. With this, however, Christian doctrine and theology have reached their limit. At this point one must stop. Also from the heart and flesh of believing Christians and theologians come such questions as: Why? Why does God will and do this and that? Why not the opposite? These questions we must nip in the bud, for they are not answered in God's Word and revelation and do not serve to the salvation of souls, which is the only purpose of Christian doctrine and theology. He who seeks to solve the unsearchable inevitably falls into disputation and wrangling with the great majestic God. It is enough to know that in God there is a certain incomprehensible will. So far revelation goes. But why and how far He wills, that is not proper for us to ask and to desire to know, for that God has hidden from us. The fact that there are unsolved and insoluble questions and secrets, which go far beyond the horizon and which God Himself has kept hidden from us with wise intention, should keep us in the fear of God and in humility, guard us from idle, dangerous speculations and determine us -which is our duty- rightly to consider and proclaim the revealed counsel of God concerning our salvation.

Verse 22:

What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. That God has borne the vessels of wrath in great patience is a historical fact. Paul expressly points to the fact that God has exercised great patience and longsuffering, even though He wanted to show His wrath and reveal His power.

The longsuffering of God does not seem to harmonize with His wrath. God was determined to manifest His wrath in a solemn way and to reveal His power, as He did in the destruction of Pharaoh. The men who incur final wrath are called vessels of wrath, not tools of wrath. They stand in contrast to the vessels of mercy, to men who experience mercy. Previously the apostle contrasted the objects of mercy to the objects of obduracy. With him, therefore, the vessels of wrath and the objects of obduracy are identical.

The judgment of obduracy is the first step of final judgment, of eternal wrath and damnation. It remains established that God hardens whomever He will, that He wanted to show His wrath, He had borne the vessels of wrath, before the demonstration of wrath, in great longsuffering. This does not only mean that God has postponed wrath and punishment. Postponing wrath is not longsuffering. But the purpose of God's longsuffering always is the repentance and improvement of the sinner. The Lord "is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. 3, 9.

However, when God grants sinners time for repentance and spares them, He does not leave them to find the ways and means of repentance and salvation for themselves. But the longsuffering of God shows its power in this, that God has His Word

preached to men, through the Word calls them to repentance and invites them to salvation in Christ. It was shown above that the judgment of obduracy, which results in final wrath, is merited by man, always presupposes man's self-obduracy. To the self-hardened, whom He finally hardened and damned, God had offered His grace and earnestly wanted to save them. But they were not willing. And now Paul says that God has been very patient and longsuffering with the vessels of wrath, that not only once but repeatedly He had urged and exhorted them to repentance and conversion. Even when they were already ripe for destruction, God patiently bore the vessels of wrath. Therefore, also with such sinners, who are already ripe for judgment, who have already filled the measure of their sins and deserve to be snatched away suddenly by His anger, God yet has patience. When obstinate sinners have despised and exhausted all the riches of divine goodness, patience and longsuffering, then God withdraws His hand from them and gives them over into their hardened disposition and thus into destruction.

Verses 23,24:

And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy; which he had afore prepared unto glory. God bore the vessels of wrath with great patience, not only for their sake but for this purpose: to reveal the riches of His glory to the vessels of mercy. Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? God wanted to and did glorify Himself by calling and converting us from the Jews and Gentiles to Christ. God glorified His grace. Eph. 1,6. Through call and conversion, this act of divine mercy, the vessels of mercy have become what they are. Of them it is yet said that God prepared them before to glory. Already in His eternal will God had prepared them before to glory. Already in His eternal will God had prepared them to glory or ordained them to salvation and eternal glory. Matt. 25,34. Also here, as in 8,28ff.; 9,11.12, the call appears as the fulfillment of the eternal decree of election. And God's mercy appears all the greater and more glorious, in that it reaches back into eternity, in that God from eternity ordained the vessels of mercy to heavenly glory, the goal of their call.

It is well to note that the apostle neither here nor elsewhere mentions anything concerning a preparation or predestination of the vessels of wrath to damnation. If there were such a thing, it surely would have been mentioned in this connection. The context stated that God wanted to make use of the time of patience and longsuffering, granted the vessels of wrath, to glorify Himself in the vessels of mercy through grace and mercy, to gather a people from the Jews and Gentiles, who here see and experience His goodness and mercy and there should see His glory.

Throughout the present historical discussion the apostle speaks of the fate of Israel, which he places along side of the fate of the Gentiles. So when he speaks of the vessels of wrath, he has before his eyes his fellow men, who at the time when he wrote this were accursed from Christ. It was a great day of mercy for Israel when Christ, who is God over all, took from Israel the flesh and blood of men and went to and fro among His people to seek and to save that which was lost. He came unto His own, but

His own received Him not.^T To them He cried out at the close of His public ministry: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matt. 23,37. Then when the Jews nailed their Messiah to the cross, they filled the measure of their sins; then were they ripe for destruction. It would not have been too severe had God suddenly exterminated this generation of Christ's murderers from the earth. Matt. 23,32. But God had patience and granted the disobedient children yet a last time of grace.

The twelve apostles of Israel declared the salvation, which Christ had won for sinners through suffering and death, to their people first of all and preached unto them repentance and forgiveness of sins. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, wherever he came, spoke the Word of God first to the Jews of the Diaspora. When the greater part of the Jews hardened themselves to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then the judgment of obduracy, already begun in the days of Christ, was completed; and final wrath was no longer far off. "They please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." 1 Thess. 2, 15.16. The judgment of wrath in the year 70 A.D. was according to Scripture the final day for Israel, a type and beginning of the judgment of the world. Matt. 16,28; Mark 9,1; Luke 9,27. At the same time, however, during this last period of Israel's history the Church of the New Testament was being built in the heathen world, especially through the ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. In those days God had revealed the riches of His glory and the fulness of His mercy to the poor, erring heathen. When the Jews did not deem themselves worthy of eternal life, the apostles turned to the heathen and gathered together from the peoples of the heathen a great harvest. And wherever the Gospel of Christ was preached and brought fruit, there also a number of Jews was added to the congregation of Christ. These are the historical facts, the great deeds of God, upon which Paul looks back, having already happened when he wrote this letter.

Meanwhile, the work of God's patience and mercy has also since then continued and still continues today. God endures the vessels of wrath with great patience. That is true of individuals. God waits a long time. He speaks, exhorts, warns, invites, a long time before He finally rewards and rejects a man. That is true of the whole world. God is very longsuffering and postpones Judgment-day, final wrath. He yet gives the vessels of wrath time for repentance. And He endures the godless world, hostile to Christ and long ripe for judgment, with much longsuffering, so that from the ends of the earth many souls should be saved and won for the eternal kingdom, so that the number of the elect should be accomplished. "Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." According to this design God has called also us who are now Christians.

Verses 25.26.

As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which are not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the

children of the living God.

Paul refers these words of Hosea to the call and pardoning of the Gentiles. In his prophecy Hosea reveals to the idolatrous Kingdom of the Ten Tribes that the Lord would no longer be gracious to them and that they would become like the heathen. The Ten Tribes then also perished in the heathen world after their removal into the Assyrian Captivity. But to the threat there is immediately attached a promise, a Messianic promise, Hos. 1,10: "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." The first part of the prophecy is evidently an echo of the patriarchal promise received by Abraham. Gen. 12,3; 15,5; 17,5; 22,17. The seed of Abraham, however, is the spiritual posterity. Rom. 4,17. Accordingly in Hos. 1,10 "the children of Israel," whose number should be as the sands of the seas, are the members of God's New Testament people; the place where it was said to them, "Ye are not my people," is the heathen land; those not called His people are the heathen to whom also belonged those Israelites, who had become like the heathen. And of the Gentiles it is here prophesied that they in Messianic times would be and be called the sons of the living God. The continuation of the prophecy agrees with this, Hos. 1,11: "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel."

These words can mean nothing else than the gathering of the New Testament Church from all peoples, the one flock under the one Shepherd, John 10,11, which is here described in Old Testament expressions under the picture of the return from the captivity. For the children of Israel, in the real sense of the word, in distinction from the children of Judah, the Ten Tribes, never returned to Canaan from the Exile. And when it reads further in Hos. 2,1: "Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah," and in 2,23; "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God," thus, according to the context, reference is made to the mercy which the Gentiles should experience. In Hos. 1,10; 2,23 there is, therefore, a direct Scriptural testimony for the call, conversion and pardoning of the Gentiles.

Verses 27.28:

Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: for he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. Is. 10,22.23.

In the last days, before the judgment of the proud Assyrian world-power takes place, in the days of the Messiah a remnant of Israel will be converted. A remnant will be converted to the strong God, to Christ Emmanuel. Is. 9,6. To be sure, it will be only a remnant, though the Israelites be as numerous as the sands of the sea. The great mass of Israel will not be con-

verted. What the unconverted and hardened mass of people will experience is destruction. Divine justice will gush forth as in floods over the lost masses. Yes, in the midst of the earth the Almighty, the Lord Zabaoth, will complete the utter ruin. The judgment of wrath over Israel appears as the beginning of the final judgment of the world. God will carry out His judgment in a final, decisive manner. Not only upon Israel, but upon the whole world the Lord Zabaoth will execute a definite judgment.

Verse 29:

And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrhah. Is. 1,9. In this prophecy, Is. 1, Isaiah paints in short, marked lines the disobedient and impenitent Israel, as it was at his time and remained in later times, and threatens the judgment, which already began in his days and was finally completed in the mighty catastrophe of 70 A.D. Then the wrath of God was poured out over Judah-Jerusalem, similarly as once over the godless cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. All apostate children are dedicated to wrath and destruction, not only those who are snatched away by such visible judgments. Nevertheless, Judah was not altogether like the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, of whom not one remained when the Lord destroyed those cities. In this case God kept a seed for Himself. Those are the true Israelites, who have shared in Christ's salvation.

With these two prophetic quotations the apostle has confirmed the words: "Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." God, as prophesied in the Scriptures of the Old Covenant, called and gathered a people, Christendom, for Himself from the Gentiles and also from the Jews, in spite of the rejection of the great mass already proclaimed by the prophets.

In view of these facts all objections against God must be silenced. The offense, which one could take at divine sovereign will, disappears. Not as though the apostle modified and limited what he before wrote of divine sovereignty, as though God made no use of the right that is His. It still is true that God has mercy on whomever He will and hardens whomever He will. God, as Creator and Sovereign, has that right. Of that Paul does not retract one iota. That truth is and remains offense and annoyance for carnal reason and for believing Christians a "touch me not," so to speak.

After he has shown his readers the great and majestical God from afar, the apostle suddenly turns their glance away from God's blinding majesty and presents to them the God of all mercy and His saving will, attested in Scriptures and manifested in history, in the call of the Jews and Gentiles, in the gathering of the Church. If we rightly consider with what great patience God has borne the vessels of wrath, how earnestly He wanted their salvation and thereto made use and still makes use of the time of patience, in order to reveal to the vessels of mercy the riches of His glory; how He has gathered a people from the lost masses of the heathen and retained a remnant from the rejected Jewish race; and further consider that this did not happen by chance, but according to Scriptures, by God's counsel and will; then, humanly speaking, all suspicion, as though this God could act partially and unjustly, disappears. Then we lose all desire and

inclination to investigate what is too sublime for us and with all the thoughts of our soul plunge into the abyss of divine mercy, open for all sinners, and with whole heart rejoice in the salvation which falls to us and to others.

Faith of the Gentiles and Unbelief of the Jews 30-33

The apostle has quoted the words of Isaiah, which state that God retained for Himself a remnant from Israel, and shown that this prophecy has been fulfilled since God called for Himself also a people from the Jews through the Gospel. It is, nevertheless, a remnant from Israel which is converted and saved. And this remnant stands in contrast to the great mass of the children of Israel, which is as the sand of the sea, and which would according to the prophets be exterminated and destroyed. Thus Paul comes back to the chief thought begun in 9,1: the rejection of Israel.

Verse 30:

Now the apostle raises the question: What shall we say then? What shall we judge then? He immediately answers this question and asserts a fact which must be kept in mind if one wishes rightly to understand and judge the deplorable lot of Israel.

Verse 30:31:

That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

The Gentiles did not eagerly pursue righteousness. In no wise did they concern themselves with righteousness. They rather endeavored only to satisfy their sinful lusts. Yet, behold, there came in their way of sin, altogether unsought, in the Word of the Gospel, the righteousness which avails before God, which becomes sinful man's through faith. And so they, without any work or effort on their part, received the righteousness; without running the race, they yet received it as the prize of the race. Righteousness, along with faith which applies the same, is the pure gift of God's grace, which comes to him who seeks it not, but rather strives for the opposite.

On the other hand, Israel did what the Gentiles did not. Israel had pursued righteousness, the righteousness of the Mosaic law, which demanded what was right before God, demanded perfect righteousness. The Israelites eagerly strove to fulfill this law, at least outwardly. Yet, the endeavor was in vain. Israel did not fulfill the demands of the law, though they were inclined to do what the law required. Because Israel had such a law, therefore, they could be concerned about fulfilling it. This was in fact the aim of their national life. And that Israel, therefore, with all its striving toward righteousness yet fell short of the law of righteousness and of righteousness is the cause of Israel's rejection. Perfect righteousness is the prerequisite of salvation. That the apostle already mentioned at the beginning of the letter. 1, 16.17. Therefore, he who is destitute of this righteousness

has nothing else to expect but wrath and judgment.

Verse 32:

Wherefore? Why did Israel attain to the law? Why was Israel not even in accord with the law? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. By eagerly pursuing the law Israel attempted to attain righteousness and thus did what the heathen did not do. But their seeking after righteousness was not by faith but by the works of the law. And for that reason Israel did not conform to but fell short of the law. For no sinner can fulfill the demands of the law. By the works of the law no flesh is justified. The only way to righteousness is faith, faith in Jesus Christ, who through His righteousness, as through His suffering and death, has prepared a perfect righteousness, which satisfies all the demands of the law. Had Israel, as the Gentiles, received the Gospel of Christ in faith, they would have attained and done justice to the law and all its demands. As the Gentiles, they would have acquired righteousness. However, because they rejected this faith and were instead occupied with the works of the law, they fell short of the law and righteousness and lost salvation thereby.

For they stumbled at that stumblingstone. The great majority of the Israelites took offense at the Rock of offense. That is Christ. This Rock was likewise laid in their way, as they pursued the law, in the preaching of the Gospel which they heard. And they took offense at Him. Denoting both sin and punishment this means: "Taking offense, they suffered injury." Those of Israel became indignant and took offense at Christ, who as their Savior from sin destroyed their self-righteousness. Such offense had as a result stumbling, fall and destruction.

Verse 33:

And so in Israel was verified what Isaiah prophesied: As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offense: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. Is. 28,16: 8, 14,15. The costly Stone, which the Lord laid in Zion, was the Son of David, the Messiah of Israel, upon whom the Church of the New Testament should build. How easily Israel could have found salvation in Christ. But no, Israel despised the salvation of King Messiah. So for them the Rock of salvation became a stumblingstone and a rock of offense. To the believing children Christ will be a protecting Sanctuary, but to disobedient and unbelieving Israel, to the great mass of people which rejects Christ Emmanuel, a Stumblingstone and Rock of offense unto destruction.

Such was the state of affairs with Israel when Paul wrote this letter. Christ had appeared and presented Himself to His people as the promised Helper and Redeemer. The apostle of Christ had first declared to the Jews that there was salvation in no one else but in Christ, the Crucified and the Resurrected. The great majority of Israel, however, had from the beginning taken offense at Christ and became confirmed in their enmity against Christ. Thus for them Christ, according to God's just decree, was appointed to this purpose: that they further and more violently took offense at Him and were finally dashed to pieces. Thus the apostle points to the severe guilt of Israel, their fully-matured unbelief, as the adequate cause of their destruction and damnation.

Chapter 10

Faith of the Gentiles and Unbelief of the Jews

1 - 21

Verse 1:

Proceeding to point out the severe guilt of Israel, the apostle again wards off the misconception that he had no heart and sympathy for his relatives according to the flesh, that he too for his part, because they bore enmity to him and to his apostleship, returned this enmity. He assures his brethren, the Christian readers, that he, who was, as the apostle to the Gentiles, concerned about their salvation, did not begrudge his people Israel salvation. They should not think that he had pleasure and joy in judging and damning Israel. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. This desire of the apostle becomes a prayer, a petition to God. His desire and prayer are directed towards their salvation. The purpose of his desire and prayer is that they might be saved.

Verse 2:

a

For I bear them record that they have zeal of God. This motivated him to make his wish and intercession. He bears witness of them, yes, one must grant that they are zealous for God and are not indifferent. For centuries under heathen rulers they had adhered to the customs and religion of their fathers; they had endured the bloodiest of persecutions because of their monotheistic cultus. They were industrious and zealous in the adoration of Lord Jehovah, in the payment of tithes and offerings. They were zealous for the law of God. And the goal of their zeal was salvation. Paul says in Acts 26,7: "Unto which promise (resurrection of the dead) our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come." Why should he not then from his heart wish and also pray God they they might reach their desired goal.

Nevertheless, over against his testimony in their behalf the apostle places a weighty "but." But not according to knowledge. In their zeal for God knowledge was not the standard, did not influence them. Paul wishes to present Israel's guilt. So he cannot mean that Israel was zealous in ignorance, that they lacked only the right knowledge -which would rather serve to their excuse. This absence of the right knowledge was not only an intellectual but also a moral error. The Jews were not willing to know God rightly. The Jews were stupid; they did not want to understand. God made known to Israel in His Word who He was and how He wished to be honored. But they did not think of and want God as He was and as He revealed Himself to them, but as they thought of and wanted Him to be. Their zeal for God was no God-pleasing zeal. The right zeal for God, the right service of God, remains within the limits of God's revelation and does not follow its own thoughts and opinions.

Verse 3:

In what respect were the Jews zealous in ignorance? In what respect did they deny the right knowledge? For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the

righteousness of God. God has prepared righteousness for sinners and revealed and offered it in the Gospel. Yes, God had also especially made known to Israel in the Gospel, as already in Moses and the prophets, how sinful man is justified before God; that He himself, God, out of pure grace has wrought for man a perfectly adequate righteousness; and that just this is the right adoration of God if man praises and acknowledges such grace of His. But of that the Jews do and did not want to know anything. They let the righteousness of God out of consideration. The Jews knew the voices of the prophets, which every Sabbath were read in the schools, but they misunderstood and denied the same and so also Christ, of whom the prophets testified. And so they also misunderstood and paid no attention to the righteousness of God and attempted to establish their own righteousness. They wanted to be justified before God by their own deeds. These were their own thoughts of God and righteousness. They did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God and His way of salvation. Therefore, their zeal did not help them to salvation, for they did not see and want to go the only way to salvation indicated by God: through the righteousness of God and faith.

The apostle for his own person desires, wishes and requests salvation for Israel. Nothing else would he rather have than that Israel should direct their zeal, which they revealed in an evil way and in an evil thing, in the establishment of work-righteousness, to a good thing, the righteousness of God, and so attain salvation. But the Jews by their unbelief hinder not only the fulfillment of his wish, the hearing of his prayer, but finally his intercession itself.

Christians also pray for the non-Christians, for their offenders and persecutors, pray that God should convert them. Nevertheless, in the measure the latter take offense at the Stumblingstone and harden themselves against God's Word and the right knowledge, they withdraw their intercession until it ceases altogether. "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." 1 John 5,16. That is the sin, the condition or state of obduracy.

Verse 4:

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. That Christ is the end of the law does not mean that He is the goal or fulfillment of the same, but that the law ceases in Christ and has made way for the righteousness of faith. The law places demands upon man, demands perfect righteousness. Therefore, the apostle called it the "law of righteousness." And if all the demands of the law are fulfilled, then the law has reached its goal; then it has nothing more to say to man. However, Christ in man's stead has perfectly fulfilled all the demands of the law. And so in Christ the law has come to its end, has received its due. Self-evidently the question here is how man is justified before God and saved. With that the law has nothing to do.

For what purpose is Christ the end of the law? "For righteousness to every one that believeth." Since Christ fulfilled the law and brought it to an end, there is on hand perfect righteousness for every one who believes. Man needs only to take in faith the fulfillment of the law, the obedience of Christ, this

perfect righteousness. Whoever applies to himself Christ and His righteousness in faith has righteousness, is - not: will be - righteous before God. And this fact, on which the New Testament story of salvation and economy concentrates, that Christ has come and fulfilled the law and so brought it to an end; these facts, that there is righteousness in Christ and that whoever believes in Him is righteous and is no more liable to the demands or reproach of the law, are proof that the Jews are very stupid and do not want to see and know what the righteousness of God concerns.

The apostle is right in accusing the Jews with punishable stupidity, for what he has just stated is indisputably the purpose of the sending of Christ. And that the Jews ignore. If they would only open their eyes and not wilfully close them to the clear light of the New Testament, to the publicly attested truth and fact concerning Christ's fulfilling all righteousness, they would not again seek out the law and establish their own righteousness of God.

What Paul writes here pertains to all unbelievers. This is the sum of the Gospel, the unmistakable shibboleth of true religion: Christ is the end of the law; whoever believes in Him is righteous. And so it is inexcusable ignorance if one does not know where to look for righteousness, salvation and life, if one misunderstands and denies the righteousness wrought by God and instead establishes his own righteousness.

Verse 5:

The apostle now illustrates the contrast between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. In its entirety Lev. 18,5 reads: "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them." So whatever man keeps and does the regulations and laws of God will receive eternal life. That is true of the righteousness of the law. This righteousness depends upon the deed. The righteousness of the law consists in doing what God has commanded in the law of Moses and not failing in anything. By perfectly fulfilling the law, he wins life; he is saved. The preliminary condition of salvation is nothing else than perfect obedience.

On the other hand, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Gal. 3,10; Deut. 27, 26. To be sure, there never was a man who kept all the commandments of God and perfectly fulfilled the law. So there never was, nor in the future will there ever be, a man who was or will be saved in this way, namely, by the works of the law. By the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified. No man on earth has the righteousness of the law. The righteousness of the law does not exist in reality but only as the demand of God and as the condition placed by God upon man for the attainment of salvation.

Many are of the opinion that the righteousness of the law was the way of salvation ordained by God in Old Testament times, the basis for the attainment of salvation, and that the righteousness of faith is the way of salvation first since the time of Christ, in New Testament times. With that Paul's entire

doctrine is overthrown. According to Pauline and Scriptural doctrine there is only one way to salvation for all men, at all times: that is faith and righteousness of faith. In Rom. 4 Paul pointed out in detail that Abraham was justified and received the inheritance not by the works of the law but by faith alone. And the same is true of David during the time after the giving of the law. At no time was it God's intention to justify and save men through the law. Paul explicitly denies that the law was given for the purpose of saving men. Gal. 3,21. Men who wished to be justified and saved before God by the works of the law follow their own thoughts.

Certainly, the law of Moses is the law of God. The Mosaic law reveals God's eternal, unchangeable will. Everything that He has commanded in the law is His earnest demand of all men. And God has attached to the fulfillment of the law: life, salvation; to the transgression of the same: Curse, wrath, death, damnation. But all that to the purpose that man may know that he has not kept His commandments, that he confesses his sins and knows that he has merited curse and wrath, and that he then, despairing of the righteousness of the law, turns to the righteousness of faith.

Verses 6.7:

The righteousness of faith is altogether different from the righteousness of the law. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) Paul here is not quoting Deut. 30, 11-14, for he is only clothing his own thoughts in Mosaic words. Then too Moses is concerned with the doing of the law, while Paul is concerned with the righteousness of faith. Nor are these questions the expressions of unbelief, identical with the denial of Christ's incarnation and resurrection, but rather questions despairing of the possibility of what is desired.

Nor one should think: Who will ascend into heaven in order to bring Christ down from heaven? Who will descend into the deep, the place of the dead, in order to bring up Christ from the dead? The one, as the other, is impossible, and also very unnecessary. One first does not need to produce or bring Christ from afar. Christ is not so distant and inaccessible. Yes, Christ, the Mediator, is already here. And where the Savior is, one surely cannot act as if He were not there, as if He were inaccessiblely distant, were yet in heaven or in the deep. Christ has already come down from heaven, completed His work on earth, and fulfilled all the righteousness of the law. Christ has already died and risen again from the dead and so has atoned for the curse of the law and quieted God's wrath. Christ by His appearance in the flesh by His life, suffering, death, and resurrection, wrought a perfectly adequate righteousness for sinners. And so in and with Christ the righteousness so necessary for men has been procured. For it is the righteousness of faith that speaks of Christ.

Verse 8:

But what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach

The righteousness of faith says: Nigh unto you is the Word, not the Word which Moses speaks of, the law, but the Word of apostolic preaching, the Gospel, the Word of faith, which is simply to be believed, not something that you need first do, but something that you need only accept with its content in faith. This Word speaks of and contains Christ and the righteousness and brings both very close to man. He who accepts this Word in faith grasps and has Christ and the righteousness which avails before God.

Verse 9:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Here emphasis is placed on the object of confession and faith. The Word of apostolic preaching and, in and with this Word, salvation in Christ are so near man that he needs only to believe with his heart and confess with his mouth in order to share in the same. By placing confession before faith Paul merely adopts the order used by Moses in the passage from Deuteronomy. The meaning is this: If you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Lord and that God has raised Him from the dead, then you will be saved.

The short, summarizing content of Christian faith and confession is "Jesus the Lord." Jesus is called Lord as the perfect Mediator of salvation, therefore, the Author of righteousness. That Jesus has become by His resurrection from the dead. He who believes in his heart and confesses with his mouth that Jesus is his Lord and Savior and that God has raised Him from the dead, will certainly be saved, will receive future salvation. For in faith, which proves itself in confession, he lays hold of Christ and righteousness, obtained through Christ's death and sealed through His resurrection, which guarantees future salvation.

Verse 10:

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Here heart and mouth are stressed. The faith of the heart redounds unto righteousness, and confession of the mouth unto salvation. In order to become righteous and be saved, it is necessary that one believe with the heart and confess with the mouth. For that no deed, effort and exertion on the part of man are necessary. For the faith of the heart, urging the confession of the mouth, applies to itself the righteousness in Christ, which has salvation as an inevitable result, and makes the same its own innermost possession. Righteousness and salvation are all we need and all we want. In order to receive them we must believe with the heart what is put into the heart and confess with the mouth what is put into the mouth.

One dare not misunderstand this comparison of faith and confession as though both stood in the same relation to righteousness and salvation. It is faith alone which justifies and saves man. It is faith alone which lays hold of Christ and the righteousness in Him. And only in the object of faith lies justifying and saving power. The confession of the mouth is a fruit and work of faith and has nothing to do with apprehending Christ. Indeed, confession follows of necessity from faith. Heart and mouth are together. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. He who believes in Jesus Christ, his Lord and Savior, from his heart,

can do nothing else; he must outwardly with the mouth confess Christ before God and men. Whose mouth is altogether silent concerning Christ, his heart also knows nothing of Christ. And so the confession of the mouth is proof that faith lives in the heart, proof of true, living faith. And only faith of the heart, only true, living faith, grasps Christ and makes Him its own. Only the faith of the heart justifies and saves man. Since the confession of the mouth is proof of true, living faith, one can rightly say that faith which confesses justifies and saves man, not inasmuch as it confesses but only inasmuch as it really and actually grasps Christ. Justifying and saving faith proves its power in confession; it is a powerful and living thing. Finally, because faith and confession, heart and mouth, are so close together, because the speech of the mouth flows from the heart and constitutes the disposition of the heart, we can put both faith of the heart and confession of the mouth side by side and say that faith and confession redound to man's righteousness and salvation.

Finally, it is well to note that in this section, 10, 5-10, which is a short recapitulation of the doctrine of justification, "righteousness," "Christ," "Word," "faith" stand in the same relation to one another as they did in 3, 21 - 5, 21. The righteousness, wherewith alone the sinner can stand before God, the righteousness which avails before God and which results in final salvation, appears here also a perfect quantity and gift, wrought and sealed through Christ's death and resurrection, offered to man in the Word and grasped by faith, so that he who believes the Word is righteous before God and will finally be saved. The righteousness of faith is only to be accepted by faith. The righteousness of the law, however, depends upon the deeds of man. But this contrast the apostle brings home to the hearts of his readers how God in Christ, in the Word of faith, has brought salvation close to man, but which remains so far from and unattainable for him if he seeks to obtain it by works. Unbelief is, therefore, grave folly and severe guilt. How foolish, how inexcusable it is if man now yet slaves with works that never lead to the goal and rejects the salvation so close to him!

Verses 11.12:

It is faith that saves. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. Is. 28, 16. He who trusts in Christ will not perish, will not be deprived of salvation. Only faith, trust, is mentioned, not confession, for faith is the deciding thing. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. It makes no difference whether the believer is a Jew or a Greek. For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. Christ is the Lord and Savior of all believers, rich enough to help to salvation all who call upon Him. Therefore, there is not difference between Jew and Greek. Therefore, every one who believes in Him will be saved.

Verse 13:

The Lord is rich in salvation and help to all those who call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Joel 2, 32. Calling upon Jehovah is calling upon

Christ, for He is the Lord Jehovah. Thus Christians call upon and pray to Christ as their Lord and God. Whosoever believes and calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved, whether he be Jew or Greek. To everyone, also to the Jews, God has brought salvation near. If only the Jews would call upon the name of the Lord, they would be saved. How heavily, therefore, weighs the guilt of their unbelief!

Verse 14.15:

With a series of questions the apostle expresses what calling upon the Lord presumes. How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? One cannot call on the name of the Lord if he does not believe in the Lord with his whole heart. And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? One cannot believe in the Lord Jesus where he has not heard of Him. And how shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they hear except someone proclaim and preach the Lord Jesus? Hearing presumes preaching. And how shall they preach, except they be sent? Reference is especially made to the apostles, who were immediately called and sent by Christ. 1 Cor. 1,17. Yet, the axiom "no preaching without sending" applies to the official preaching of salvation of all New Testament preachers. No preacher can rightly administer the office of the New Testament if he is not called, sent and equipped with Spirit and gifts by the Lord. And so the mediate call, through the Church, is a divine mission and call. Finally, even the personal witness of all believing Christians, which is powerful enough to awaken saving faith, rests upon the command of the Lord. "As my Father has sent me, even so send I you." "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." "Preach the Gospel to every creature." Saving faith and calling upon the Lord thus presume hearing, preaching and sending.

The necessity for preachers proclaiming salvation is actually met. As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. Is. 52,7. Their feet are as though winged because they are the messengers of joyful tidings. They announce joy, salvation, good things. The Gospel of the nimble messengers is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. What the prophets saw in spirit is now in operation. The messengers of God go over the earth and proclaim to every one, to Jews and Gentiles, salvation in Christ, so that every one can hear and believe, call upon Him and be saved.

Verse 16:

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. God had sent His messengers, who proclaimed salvation. But so many refused to accept and obey the Gospel, God's message of salvation. Disobedience to the Gospel is nothing else than unbelief, as then faith is essentially obedience to the Gospel. Thus formally and solemnly, after having previously pointed to it, the apostle substantiates Israel's unbelief, and as severe guilt. If the Jews lose salvation, the fault is their's alone and not God's. God has done and prepared all that is necessary for faith and salvation. He has given the Gospel and sent preachers. However, they did not and did not want to receive the Gospel of their salvation, which was preached to them at God's commission.

The apostle confirms his judgment over Israel by the judgment which the prophet Isaiah long before pronounced over his people. For Esaiass saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? Is. 53, 1. This report is the prophetic preaching, just such preaching as is contained in Isaiah 53, the preaching of the humiliation and exaltation of the Servant of God. In the expression "our report" the apostle joins himself to all the preachers of all times, who like himself testified of Christ, therefore, also to the apostles and preachers of the New Testament. But who has believed our preaching? No one, as good as no one, very few. It is a painful complaint which the prophet makes in the name of all the Gospel preachers. At the same time, this complaint is a severe accusation. From the days of Isaiah on unbelief, that they did not believe the preaching concerning Christ, is the mark of Israel.

Verse 17:

What follows then? So then faith cometh by hearing. Hearing is to be understood in the sense of message, preaching, and not as an act of hearing. Preaching is the necessary prerequisite of faith. In that the prophet prepares himself for the great message of Christ's suffering and the glory thereafter, he first expresses his grief that this preaching finds as good as no faith or approval, that it does not meet with the expected reception. Therein lies implicitly: no faith without a message; where there is a message, there faith is made possible; there all can and should believe. Faith depends on the message. One can only believe if he knows and has heard on whom he should believe. The apostle adds: and hearing by the word of God. The message of the prophets and apostles is no mere human proclamation, but according to nature and concept, of divine contents, the Word of divine preaching, identical with God's Word and revelation. Preaching by means of the Word and command of God occurs since God has sent prophets, apostles, preachers.

Having spoken of the connection between faith, preaching, sending, the apostle adds these words in order to put the unbelief, disobedience of the Jews into the most glaring light. By their unbelief they oppose that connection, the order of salvation established by God, and frustrate what God has done and prepared to bring man salvation.

Verse 18:

But I say, Have they not heard? The apostle himself raises this objection. It did not remain unintelligible to them, did it? Having rebuked the unbelief, disobedience of the Jews, the apostle presupposes that the Jews have heard the message of Christ, the voices of God's messengers. One can only expect faith of those who have heard the message. One can only reproach those with disobedience who have heard the Gospel. But has the apostle supposed too much? Have all the Jews really heard the Gospel? Have the Jews abroad, scattered throughout the heathen lands, remained without report and knowledge of Christ?

The apostle answers: Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. In the beginning of Psalm 19 the psalmist speaks of the heavens which declare the glory of God, and then remarks in verse 4 that this message of heaven has gone through all the earth, unto the ends of the world. The use of these words of the Psalm by Paul does

not justify one in giving this message of heaven a spiritual interpretation and in converting this witness of God's revelation in nature in the first part of the Psalm into a prophecy of the preaching of the Gospel. For the apostle here introduces no Scriptural quotation by simply, as before, clothes his thoughts with Old Testament words, which fittingly express just what he wants to say.

The sound of the Gospel and the voices of the Gospel preachers have gone out into all the world. One cannot unduly press the apostle's words, as though he taught that already at his time the report of Christ had come to every people of the earth in a manner unknown to us. His words only describe the general spread of Christ's Gospel in the then-known world. Thus in Luke 2,1 the Roman Empire, which was taxed by Caesar Augustus, is called "all the world." And in Rom. 1,8 Paul had said that the faith of the Roman Christians was spoken of "throughout the whole world." So wide-spread was the preaching of the Gospel at the time when Paul wrote this letter that in the known world, in all parts of the Roman Empire, the name of Christ was known. Then certainly the Gospel did not remain unknown to the Jews of the Diaspora. And so the Jews cannot excuse their unbelief by advancing that they did not hear of the Gospel. The voices of the Gospel preachers resounded in all lands and in all cities of the known world. There wasn't a synagogue where the Gospel was not heard; there wasn't a Jew in the world, who could justly plead ignorance of the Gospel.

Verse 19:

The apostle has removed all excuse for the unbelief of the Jews. Also the excuse that they had not heard of the Gospel. The messengers of salvation followed after them unto the ends of the earth. But I say, Did not Israel know? Israel did not take to heart the time of her visitation. That was the severe guilt of the people. Luke 19, 42.44. Israel was lacking in the saving knowledge of the Gospel. Paul does not simply write: "Israel did not know." Rather: "But I say, It is not so that Israel did not know, is it?" It is unthinkable, unbelievable that Israel, the chosen people, to whom God from ages past had intrusted His word and promises, should ignore and leave unnoticed the message of the promises' fulfillment, or despise and reject it. The apostle is astonished and surprized and indignant over the undeniable, clear fact that Israel did not understand and believe the Gospel.

It is very surprizing that Israel did not understand and believe the Gospel. Yet one should not take offense at this. For the prophets already before proclaimed the unbelief of Israel, First Moses saith. The first who spoke of this was Moses, already Moses, with whom the Scriptures begin. I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. Deut. 32,21.

The Israelites had aroused God's jealousy and displeasure by their idols and vanities, by praying to vain idols instead of to the living God. And so God through a foolish people, through a people which is not a people, not God's people, in that He would turn His grace to them and accept them as His people, will make the Israelites jealous and angry. This foolish people, of which Moses speaks, which is not a people, is the ungodly heathen world. So here the conversion, pardoning of the heathen

of the heathen is prophesied. Stated not for its own sake, it appears as only the cause on account of which the jealousy, displeasure and wrath of Israel are inflamed. In this connection Moses prophesied of Israel's future apostasy that finally brings down God's wrath, which burns into the lowest part of hell. The Israelites are "a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith." Deut. 32,20. They forsook God and served idols. Their corrupt nature and disposition reached their climax when they begrudged the heathen God's grace, when they took offense at God's grace, which is freely offered to sinful, godless men. Thus Moses spoke of Israel's unbelief, which he characterized as opposition to the Lord's grace. Man does not want to know anything of the Gospel, because its sweet, comforting content is offensive to him. A clear example of this unbelief of the Jews is found in Acts 13, 42ff.

Verse 20:

Further, But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. Is. 65,1. God made Himself known to them who did not seek Him and showed Himself unto those who did not look for Him. This is another prophecy of the conversion of the heathen. In New Testament times, as is prophesied by the prophets, God, altogether unasked and unsought, revealed and made Himself known to the heathen in the Gospel. And these have accepted the Gospel and so have known and found the Lord Christ and entered into blessed fellowship with God.

Verse 21:

Here too the heathen are only mentioned for the sake of contrast, for the sake of the Jews. But to Israel he saith. Thus Paul calls attention to the contrast. This then pertains to the Jews: All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. Is. 65,2.

God continually, the whole day, spread out His hands towards Israel, in order to draw them unto Himself and embrace them. But Israel was an obstinate people. They did not wait to be told and opposed. Thus also Isaiah prophesies of Jewish unbelief. He regards it as obstinate, stiff-necked rejection of the lasting efforts of God's love, as open opposition and protest against God's gracious will. The Lord's lament over Jerusalem, for example, shows the fulfillment of this prophecy. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matt. 23,37. Yet also at the time of the apostle God spread out His arms to Israel, in that He attempted to soften their hard hearts through the heart-winning preaching of the Gospel and bore the vessels of wrath with great patience. The Jews, however, despised the riches of divine goodness, patience and longsuffering and frankly and freely declared: We are unwilling; we do not want to be saved.

That is true of the unbelievers of all times. What an abyss of malice unbelief is! To lost and damned men comes the eternal mercy, the open, loving arms of Him who bows to the sinners. And man forcibly withdraws himself from the loving arms of God and says to Him: "No, I do not want you." Both Isaiah and Paul shamed the Jews by the example of the heathen and then bared Jewish unbelief in its entire shame and atrocity.

Chapter 11

God has not Rejected His People

1 - 10

Verse 1:

The apostle's people, Israel, is accursed from Christ and excluded from salvation. This is due to their persistent unbelief. Paul now refers back to these chief thoughts of the two previous chapters and says: I say then, Hath God cast away his people? What I have written concerning the condemnation of the Jews is not meant as though God has rejected His people, is it? It would be a self-contradiction if God had rejected His own people. That is as unthinkable as hating one's own flesh.

Paul is not thinking of the Jewish nation as such and of its historical calling, as though the latter perished with the condemnation of the majority of Israelites. For rejection is as much as condemnation, exclusion from salvation, something different than loss of the historical calling. "His people" designates God's people in the narrower sense of the word. The apostle has already distinguished between the Israelites descended from Abraham according to the flesh and the children of God from Israel, the children of the promise, whome God chose and called to adoption and eternal life; and he has restricted to the former what he said of Israel's rejection. This difference he wishes to discuss further. "His people," the people of God, is the sum total of the true children of God, of God's people in Israel. And it is unthinkable that God should have rejected his people. God forbid.

He confirms this denial with a reference to his own person. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. Paul was a full-blooded Israelite. For the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin were the core of the Jewish people after the return from exile. And he, the servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, shares in Christ's salvation; and so by his example he proves that there are Israelites who will be saved, that there is in Israel a people which God has not rejected.

Verse 2:

God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. All the more strongly Paul advances how unthinkable it is that God should have rejected His people. Already from eternity God had chosen His people and made them His own. Therefore, the later rejection of His people is an impossibility. For God is not a man that He should then reject those whom He has before chosen and elected, that He should fail to do what He has before decided.

God has not rejecte His people because He has chosen them from eternity, because of Paul's example, and because there was at all times a remanant in Israel which was saved.

Verses 3.4:

Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias, that is, in the part of the Books of the Kings that deals with Elias? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, how he accuses Israel before God, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. The latter pertains especially to the royal pair, Ahab

and Jezebel. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. 1 Kings 19, 18.

Verse 5:

In that time of general apostasy and religious persecution God had reserved for Himself a host of faithful servants and guarded them from apostasy. Even during the time of Israel's fall and judgment of obduracy there was a remnant. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. These are believing Israelites, who give glory to Christ and the Father of Christ, who have become members of the Church of Christ. That there is such a remnant is a result of the election of grace, because God out of free grace elected this remnant from the corrupt mass of people unto salvation.

Verse 6:

And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. Grace ceases to be grace if one intermingles it with work and conduct. And election of grace ceases to be an election of grace if God in any wise has taken man's conduct into consideration in His election. Work is not more work if grace is still spoken of, because a work that does not obtain by itself what is its result is no more work.

Verse 7:

What then? What follows from this? What then is the situation? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for. What Israel sought, according to the great mass, namely, righteousness and salvation, that they did not receive, for they wished to be justified and saved by works. But the election hath obtained it. The elect, who owe their existence and constancy to God's free grace, have obtained it. Therefore, there is in Israel a true people of God, whom He has not rejected but who share in Christ's salvation.

And the rest are blinded. Their understanding and will became blunt and hard and altogether insusceptible and insensitive to salvation in Christ and to the Word of salvation. Already in the discussion of obduracy, 9,17,18, Paul had the Jews in mind objectively. Now after he presented the unbelief and guilt of Israel at full length, he directly testifies that Israel as punishment for its unbelief has incurred God's judgment of obduracy. They were hardened by God, confirmed in their corrupt inclination; they were made insensitive to all encouragements to change it. Therefore, their obduracy is punishment for their corrupt inclination, in which they must henceforth persist, after they did not want to forsake it.

Verse 8:

No one, however, should be astonished over this severe lot of the Jews. For the same was already prophesied by the prophets. According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber. Is. 29, 9-12. God has given them a spirit of prickling, bewildering pain; according to the original Hebrew: a spirit of sleep, of bewilderment. They were so bewildered and stupified that they could not understand the prophetic Word, divine revelation.

Eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, namely, has He given them, unto this day. Thus the apostle refers back to Deut. 29, 4 where Moses holds before his people, that had seen such great signs and miracles: "Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." However, in that Paul changes the negative "the Lord hath not given you... eyes to see," etc., into the positive "God hath given them eyes that they should not see," etc., he, at the same time refers to Is. 6,10, this locus classicus of Israel's obduracy, where Isaiah received the commission from God to harden the heart of this people by his preaching: "Make the heart of this people fat ... lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart."

Israel was denied spiritual sight and hearing, the ability to grasp and understand God's Word and work. The blinding and hardening of Israel had begun in the time of Isaiah, yes, reach back in their beginnings to the days of Moses. Yet, because at the time of Christ and the apostles the judgment of obduracy over Israel was really completed, the apostle thus rightly refers the statement of Isaiah and Moses as prophecies of the New Testament.

Verse 9:

From Ps. 69, a bitter lamentation of the suffering and dying Messiah, the apostle quotes the prophecy of destruction and reward to the malicious enemies and murderers of the Messiah. And David saith, Let their table, their richly set table, their fortune, be made a snare, and a trap, let it bring about their fall, and a stumblingblock, as fatal as the hunt after the wild animal, and a recompense unto them, in that God herewith will reward them for their enmity against Christ.

Verse 10:

What is the threatened destruction? Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. They should be spirituall blinded and darkened. Their spiritual powers must become so weak that they can no more see and go the way of salvation.

What is said in these quotations from the prophets concerning the obduracy of the Jews coincides with the example of Pharaoh. 9,17.18. God hardens those who before have hardened themselves. God gives them over to their corrupt, hardened disposition and withdraws from them Spirit and grace. And when man is thus forsaken by God and His Spirit, then he is altogether incapable of knowing the truth, of repentance, of faith, of obedience.

Blessed results of Israel's Fall

11 - 15

Verse 11:

I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? First it read: "I say then, Hath God cast away his people?" No, the rejection of the Jews is not to be thought of thus. But not also thus, as though Israel had stumbled in order to fall. Paul again has those in mind whom God has given over into their malice, who have finally hardened themselves against Christ and His

salvation, whom God denies Spirit and assistance, so that it is impossible for them to turn and repent. They have stumbled and definitely fallen, never to rise again. But did they stumble in order to fall? Is their fall the end in itself? Did God intend that they should fall and be destroyed, so that He should find satisfaction in their destruction? God forbid.

The final purpose of Israel's destruction was: But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the gentiles. The fall of Israel is their unbelief. In 9,22 Paul had stated that God made use of the time of patience, when He bore the vessels of wrath in great longsuffering, to make known to the vessels of mercy, also to the heathen, the riches of His glory, and to offer them salvation in Christ. And here he stresses that the unbelief of the Jews turned salvation to the heathen, in that the apostles, after the Jews rejected the Word of salvation, traveled the streets of the heathen.

That the heathen shared in salvation again had the purpose to incite the Jews to emulation. For to provoke them to jealousy. God's design was and is that Israelites should be won for Christ through the Word and example of the believing Gentiles. And this is a design which is realized, for in verse 15 the reception of the Jews is presented as a fact. To be sure, those Jews, who are converted to Christ, are not of the obdurate Jews. They too were at first unbelieving. Nevertheless, their unbelief did not advance to obduracy. After stumbling and falling they were attracted by the Gentiles and converted to Christ.

Verse 12:

Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? The injury and harm, which the Jews drew upon themselves by their unbelief, are the riches of the world or of the Gentiles, for as a result of their unbelief the heathen world has received the fulness of salvation and grace, all the riches of Christ. If this is the case, how much more will their fulness bring the world blessing and salvation. The fulness of the Jews is not all Jews descended from Abraham according to the flesh but all Jews who have salvation in Christ. They are God's people in Israel, whom God before chose unto Himself, in other words, the full number of the elect from Israel. And when this fulness is complete, when all the elect from Israel have been brought in, then there will be a new, greater gain for the world. Wherein this gain consists is seen from the following.

Verse 13:

Paul proceeds to direct himself to the heathen proselytes of the Roman congregation. For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office. His readers might well consider in their character of heathen that he, inasmuch as he is apostle to the Gentiles, glorifies this his office by a faithful and zealous execution of the same, for the purpose of converting many heathen, and at the same time, of provoking to emulation his relatives according to the flesh through the believing heathen and of saving some of them.

Verse 14:

If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are

my flesh, and might save some of them. The heathen should know that Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, has the welfare and salvation of the Jews at heart. Yet, it would satisfy him if he could win but a few for Christ. For according to the prophecy in Is. 10,22; 53,1, etc., he is certain that the great majority of them do not believe the Gospel and incur final wrath and judgment, and that only a remnant of Israel will be saved. These few, who will be converted through the ministry of Paul and further through the witness and example of the believing Gentiles, form with the remnants of previous times the fulness of Israel.

Verse 15:

What incites and spurs the apostle on to provoke his relatives according to the flesh is the prospect of the blessed results of Israel's conversion. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? The rejection of the Jews establishes the reconciliation of the world. The reconciliation, obtained through the unbelief and the resultant rejection of the Jews, is not the objective reconciliation of the world with God through Christ's blood and death but the subjective reconciliation, identical with the conversion of the heathen world to God. 2 Cor. 5, 20. As a result of Israel's rejection the Word of reconciliation has gone into the heathen world and has placed many heathen into the right relation of peace with God and brought them into fellowship with Him.

If this rejection of Israel, this bad thing, has such a good result, what blessing will then flow from the acceptance of Israel? Just as little as all Jews were rejected, will all Jews be received. And when all the remaining out of Israel, whom God from the beginning has elected for Himself, unto the last one has been won for Christ and received by God into grace, then the glorious, blessed end will follow. That is nothing else but life from the dead. That is eternal life, which begins with the resurrection from the dead, the life which is the fruit and result of justification and reconciliation. When the preaching of the Gospel has reached its goal in the heathen world and in Israel, when the elect from the heathen peoples and the elect from Israel have been reconciled and have entered into fellowship with God, then the time of the world is past; then a new existence and life, the life of glorification, will begin; then the converted Jews and Gentiles will inherit the kingdom, which was prepared for them from the beginning of the world.

Looking back upon the last two sections, verses 11.12 and verses 13-15, we find the same train of thought in both. The fall of the Jews, their unbelief and their rejection redound to the salvation, to the conversion of the heathen; on the other hand, the faith of the heathen redounds to the conversion and deliverance and finally to the perfect salvation of some of Israel, the remnant, the fulness of Israel. Only that in the second section the apostle speaks of himself and of his apostleship, how through his service in the Gospel -and that is true in general of service in the Word- he helped to carry out those salutary designs of God, verses 11.12. And so the latter, verses 13-15, serves to confirm what he before said in general about the wonderful ways of God. So the working and officiating of Paul, and of New Testament preachers in general, real clearly show what

God's object was with regard to the Jews and Gentiles and how His design is carried out.

This characteristic progress in the kingdom of God we also see in the history of the Church of Christ, apart from the contrast between Jews and Gentiles. It is and remains a lamentable fact, which will not change until Judgment-day, that many, yes, the majority of those who hear the Gospel do not believe it, persist in unbelief and proceed to damnation. Nevertheless, God's kingdom progresses on earth. God masterfully understands how to bring forth good from this grossest of all evils -unbelief; how through the fall of some to raise up others. It has often happened that the Gospel, driven from one place by the ingratitude of men, traveled farther and at another place found a firm foothold and there wrought much fruit. In this way God's Word came to the Gentiles from the Jews, from the Greeks and Romans to the Germanic peoples, from the Old World to the New World. The Christian persecutions were in God's hand means to spread the Christian Church. Persecuted Christians took their treasure, riches of Christ, with them into exile and there found open hearts. And the flourishing of faith abroad has often had a wholesome reaction upon the native Church. The zeal of the newly converted provokes and awakens many who have become indolent or have already died. It is a special comfort for Christian preachers that, as Paul provoked Israel by his preaching to the Gentiles, their service reaches farther than their eyes behold. If they but faithfully carry out their office at home to the souls entrusted to their care, they thus provide instruments, through whom God then carries out His saving work in others. And these are all ways and means by which the elect from all the ends and from all the corners of the earth are brought together, through which the Church of Christ is lead toward her consummation and glorification.

Warning to Gentile Christians

16 - 24

The apostle warns the Gentile Christians against pride and presumption. That the diminishing and rejection of the Jews resulted in the salvation of the Gentiles could be occasion for them, if they yielded to their flesh, to boast of themselves over against the Jews. So Paul attaches a warning.

Verse 16:

For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. The first-fruit is the beginning of the dough, not the first-fruits of the harvest. That Paul speaks of the beginning of the dough was entailed by the regulation of the law, according to which the first-fruit of the dough should be given to the priests. Num. 15, 19-21. In reality there was and is no holy beginning and no holy dough, as little as there are a holy root and holy branches. The picture only states that the dough has the same quality as the first-fruit, and that the branches are formed as the roots.

Both pictures have the same sense, but only the latter is discussed further. Roots and branches awaken the concept of a tree; and so the apostle speaks further of an olive tree, a good olive tree, which he then contrasts to a wild olive tree. The

first is evidently a picture of Israel, the latter of the heathen world. The roots of Israel are the fathers of Israel, the patriarchs. The same are meant with the first-fruit or beginning of the dough.

However, is the Jewish nation as such meant by the olive tree and by the dough? Are all Israelites, who are descended from Abraham according to the flesh, meant by the branches? And accordingly is the perfection, which Paul ascribes to the roots and branches, only an external sanctity?

Many answer in the affirmative. Indeed Scripture also calls the entire people of Israel "the people of God." To this people was given certain advantages. God had revealed Himself to them and had given them the law and promise. Out of Israel Christ came according to the flesh. And if one desires, he may take these objective prerogatives together into the concept of sanctity.

But this outward concept of sanctity does not exactly fit the patriarchs. If the roots, the patriarchs, are called holy, one thinks of what marks and distinguishes them. And that was, on the one hand, the promise which they received, and on the other hand, faith in the promise. Paul had presented Abraham as the father and type of all believers. The Word of God first came to Abraham, and it was primarily a word of promise concerning future salvation. And this promise Abraham had received in faith. So he was sanctified through Word and faith, separated from his heathen surroundings and brought into fellowship with God.

What is further said and praised of the branches is more than external sanctity, is inner sanctity. The branches of the olive tree share in the fatness of the root and the olive tree. This means: the Israelites, pictured under the branches of the olive tree, not only received the promise from the fathers but also shared in the content of the promise, the promised blessing. One, however, only partakes of divine blessing and salvation through faith. The part of the branch that is broken off is broken off because of unbelief. Therefore, it is faith which connects the branches and keeps them joined to the tree and roots. So by branches we understand all believing Israelites, sanctified through faith. Accordingly, the good olive tree is believing Israel, God's Church, which in the time of the Old Covenant had her abode within natural Israel. Now the sense of the picture becomes clear.

Verse 17:

And if some of the branches be broken off, etc. It is a sad fact that some of the branches were broken off. They were also at first branches of the olive tree, sanctified by promise and faith, but now are they broken out of the good olive tree, are withered, dead branches and need but be burned. Although the branches broken off are not few in number, yet with the apostle those branches which remain on the olive tree count far more than the great number of branches broken off. The breaking off of these branches falls in time together with the ingrafting of the branches from the wild olive tree, with the conversion and pardoning of the Gentiles.

Thus Paul thinks of what has happened at his time, in the time of the New Testament. With the appearance of Christ and

the preaching of the Gospel a crisis arose for the believing Israelites. Many of them, who had at first believed Moses and the prophets, became worse. They took offense at the crucified Christ, at the Word of the cross. And because of their unbelief they were broken off. They remained distant from the Church of Christ and were thereby cut off from the olive tree and the root, from the promise of the blessing and fellowship with God, excluded from God's congregation. For the Church of God had now become the Church of Jesus Christ. The Christian Church, which had her origin and beginning in Israel, was the continuation of true Israel. In Christ all of God's promises, in which the fathers shared, in which all believers of the Old Testament comforted themselves, became Yea and Amen. Therefore, he of Israel, who first accepted the promises and then rejected the promised Savior, ceased to be a true Israelite, a member of God's congregation of salvation. In the number of unbelieving Jews belong also all those children of Abraham according to the flesh, whose heart had always been far from God, who had believed neither Moses nor the prophets and now did not believe Christ and the preaching of the apostles. To these, however, Paul does not refer. Only the example of the Israelites who fell from faith, as then also the example of those who after the fall were again converted and again received, suited the purpose which he here follows: to warn the Gentile Christians against apostasy.

The apostle now takes out one from the number of the Gentile Christians and deals with him as the representative of his class, in order to present clearly and concretely this grave truth to his readers. With a powerful appeal to the conscience of every individual Gentile Christian, the apostle continues: And thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them. Before you were converted, you were of the wild olive tree. You descended from the wild olive tree, from degenerate humanity, estranged from God and fallen under the curse. But you were inserted into the good olive tree, which was originally planted in Israel and whose roots were the patriarchs of Israel. You were converted to Christ through the preaching of the Gospel and became a living member of His congregation. You were planted in among them, between the original branches which remained, the believing Israelites, who now became believing Christians. And with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree. Through faith in the Gospel you partake of the benefits of Christ: reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, justification, victory over death and eternal happiness. Those are the blessings which were already promised to the fathers, and of which also the believers of the Old Covenant partook through faith in the promise.

Paul has before his eyes the olive tree in its original form and in the first stage of its growth: the roots - the patriarchs; and the branches - the believing children of the Old Covenant. In the New Covenant the appearance of the tree has changed; it has entered a new stage of development. The believing Israelites now call upon the name of Christ Jesus. They live on the Gospel of Christ. And in the congregation of the believers out of Israel are found believers from all the peoples of the earth. Nevertheless, it is the same olive tree. There is one Church of God in the Old and New Testaments, whose roots reach back to Abraham, yes, to Adam. The Christ, who appeared in the flesh, the Lord of the Christians, is the Messiah of Israel. The

Gospel of Christ, the Crucified and the Resurrected, shows that the promise, which was given to the fathers of Israel and to their children, is fulfilled. And to the believing Jews the believing Gentiles were added. Yes, Gentile Christians should consider that they were added to the Jews and not vice versa, that the Jews have first claim to the riches of God's kingdom. This truth Christ already expressed in Matt. 8,11: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. In John 10, 16: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring." In Eph. 2,11ff. Paul reminds the Gentile Christians that they were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, and so without hope and without God, but that they were brought nigh unto Christ through the preaching of the Gospel and are now fellow Citizens with all the saints of Israel.

Verse 18:

If that is so -and it is- if some of the branches have been broken out, you, however, descended from the wild olive tree, who are grafted into the good olive tree, boast not against the branches. This is the warning at which the apostle aims. He warns the Gentile Christians against self-praise and boasting directed against the branches, not against the Jews in general but against the branches broken off, against the Israelites who have fallen away and are excluded from the congregation of salvation.

But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Out of the roots sap and vital power rise into the tree and penetrate limbs and branches. The roots are the patriarchs of Israel, having become such through God's Word and promise. What strengthens and supports your Christianity is your connection with the root, with the promise, which belonged to the fathers of Israel, and which now has taken on the form of the Gospel. Only as long as a Christian imbibes and absorbs energy, strength, life from God's Word, does he remain a living member of God's congregation. The living Word of God upholds faith and keeps the believers in the fellowship and congregation of God. Therefore, no Christian can reckon as his own merit that he has remained in his place, and no Christian has reason to boast over against those who have fallen from their position.

Verses 19.20.21:

Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Paul acknowledges the fact to which the Gentile Christian points, that the fall of the Jews has led to the conversion and acceptance of the Gentiles. But he disapproves of the tendency of that objection, namely, as though the Jews had to make way for the Gentiles, because now since the entrance of the Gentiles into the kingdom, God had special pleasure in them and special displeasure in the Jews. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off. Not because they were Jews, but because they renounced their faith, Israelites lost salvation and were cut off and excluded from the congregation of salvation. And thou standest by faith. Through faith you stand in the place,

from which they have fallen. You yet hold fast in faith to God's Word and promise, and thus you stand in grace. Since that is the case, be not highminded, do not raise yourself above the branches which are broken off, but fear, lest you lose faith. For if God spared not the natural branches, the apostate Israelites, take heed lest he also spare not thee, if you depart from faith.

Verse 22:

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness. One sees the goodness and the severity of God from His conduct over against the Jews and Gentiles. To them who have fallen from grace and from the congregation of God and the saints because of their unbelief, the severity of God has been shown. God is inexorably severe with those who, being members of His congregation, renounce faith, so that He permits them to go out of the reach of His grace and love. On the other hand, to you is shown the goodness of God. That God has grafted you, hostile heathen, without any merit on your part, into the good olive tree, accepted you into His congregation and kept you in it, is pure goodness on God's part.

If thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou shalt also be cut off. Those who have experienced God's goodness in themselves must also remain in His goodness. If they forget that they owe their Christianity and state of grace, their membership in God's congregation, alone to His goodness, and raise themselves above others and despise the fallen, as though they were better, then they deny God's goodness and faith and will then be cut off. They themselves change God's goodness into severity.

Verse 23:

In order to keep the Gentile Christians in humility and to guard them against contempt for the fallen, the apostle continues: And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; they will again be accepted in grace and translated into their former state. The roles can quickly change. Those who now stand can easily fall. On the other hand, the fallen can also be raised. True, Paul speaks conditionally; yet he would not speak thus if he did not expect at least a few to rise again and return to their previous position. With those Jews who are again converted and accepted by God after the fall from faith, unbelief has not gone to the extreme, to obduracy. Their fall was not definite and their loss of salvation no permanent, final loss.

They shall be grafted in for God is powerful, for God is able to graff them in again. It would be strange if the apostle meant by this that God had the power to forgive and to reinstate the penitent, also those who again repent after their fall. Then an appeal would rather be in place to God's great grace.

The mention of the power and omnipotence of God points to the influence of God upon the heart and disposition of the fallen. The almighty God has the power also to fulfill the condition of reacceptance, the return to faith. The almighty God has the power to convert sinners and also to reconvert the fallen and again bring them into the congregation of saints. The grafting in of the heathen also implied the conversion of the heathen.

Verse 24:

For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

For if you have been cut out of your natural tree, out of the wild olive tree, and contrary to your nature, were grafted into the good olive tree, how much more will those who are branches by nature be grafted into their own olive tree? That conformable to nature is more possible than that contrary to nature. Without picture. The Gentile Christians are taken from degenerate humanity, to which they belonged by birth, custom, practise, and have been planted into the Church of God contrary to their essence and nature. Much rather will the Israelites, who originally, by virtue of the divine call and promise which Israel received, were members of God's congregation, after they have denied their nature, be placed back into their original position.

These words, which state the relation of the Gentile Christians to the Jewish Christians, contain important truths. The good olive tree is a picture of the congregation of God, the communion of saints or believers, who at first had their place in the midst of the natural posterity of the patriarchs. During the New Testament branches from the wild olive tree were grafted into the good olive tree. Many heathen were received into the Church. On the other hand, many original branches were broken out because of their unbelief, of whom some are again grafted in because they do not remain in unbelief. We know that in the course of time also many Gentile Christians fell away, some forever, others only for a time. Therefore, in the final stages of its development the olive tree comprises all natural and ingrafted branches, which have remained branches, or, if they for a time cease to be branches, have again become branches. The consummated Church of God, as in her original idea and God's eternal will, is the congregation of all believers of all times and places, those who always remain in faith, as well as those who are again converted after once renouncing faith; in other words, the fulness of the elect from all the peoples of the earth.

Yes, there are believers at all times who sooner or later again fall from faith. As long as they have faith, they stand in grace and enjoy and share in the blessings of the Church. However, as soon as faith dies, they fall from grace and are cut off from God and His Church. And there are at all times the fallen who sooner or later again come to faith through God's power and grace and return into the communion of God and His Church. To them will not be reckoned the time when they were without. They are regarded by God as true members of His Church. On the other hand, the temporary believers, whose faith ceases forever, who have no sure footing in grace and in the Church, who go in and then out again and remain without forever, belong according to God's judgment into the number of the lost children, the dead members who are no members. Nor does it help that they for a time tasted of God's goodness and the blessing of the Church. Rather their guilt and damnation will be increased because they knew and renounced the truth. And so in spite of this interchange of faith and unbelief, of faith and apostasy, of

apostasy and reconversion, the Church of God, the whole Christian Church on earth, is, nevertheless, no vague, indefinite quantity, but a definite number of saints, known to God alone.

In love which believes and hopes everything, the apostle regards his readers as God's loving children and as His elect. Nevertheless, he warns them against apostasy. Those whom God has chosen from all eternity and ordained to glory He has called and justified, and by no power of earth and hell can they be separated from the love of God in Christ. Though they err for a time, they again arise as they ought and receive the goal of their destiny. But also the elect, to whom salvation is guaranteed by their eternal election, are yet in need of warning against pride, presumption and apostasy, and of exhortation to fear, that they well take heed lest they too be cut off. For they still have the flesh, which opposes God's grace and goodness and is prone to all that is evil. With respect to God, to divine election and call, to His promise, we Christians are perfectly sure of our salvation. Yet since we still have flesh and blood, we, at the same time, work out our salvation with fear and trembling, wake and pray without ceasing, lest our flesh delude us and make us fall. And such warnings, as we find here, are the means in the hands of God to guard us against apostasy.

A Christian, who earnestly seeks his soul's salvation, finds no disagreement between the comfort of election and the warning against apostasy. Only he who considers these serious matters not in the interest of salvation, only he who speculates and desires to satisfy his foolish reason, sees here inexplicable contradictions. It is his just reward if he becomes ensnared in his own thoughts and remains caught in the trap he set for himself.

Fulness of the Gentiles and All Israel

25 - 32

Verse 25:

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits. The apostle wants to reveal a mystery to his brethren, the Christian readers, and not conceal it from them, lest they become wise in their own thinking or give way to their own thoughts. He has especially the Gentile Christians in mind, for just they could easily think wrong of this.

That blindness in part is happened to Israel. First, he does not want to conceal from his brethren that a part, but not all, of Israel has become obdurate. The apostle had said that also at present there was a remnant in Israel according to the election of grace and that this remnant had received what Israel did not. Then he added: "And the rest were blinded." From this one could conclude that all Israelites, who at the time of the apostle did not partake of salvation and were outside the Christian Church, had been hardened. But that is not the case. The apostle now brings forth that not all were under the judgment of obduracy at the time. That believing Israel was excluded from obduracy is self-evident. But he has unbelieving Israel in mind and wants to make known to his readers that at the time unbelieving Israel had not as a whole become obdurate. He has just established the possibility, yes, uttered the expectation, that some of the branches cut off from the olive tree would forsake unbelief and again be engrafted. And these Israelites do not

belong to the obdurate Israelites. Because of the rebirth of the apostates Israel was only hardened in part. And this partial hardening will also in the future be the characteristic of Israel and will continue until the time which has been set.

That time is until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. This is the entrance of the heathen not into the kingdom of glory but into the Church of Christ, into the congregation pictured by the olive tree. The entire context deals with the development and progress of the kingdom of God on earth. The fulness of the Gentiles is all heathen who enter the Christian Church or are converted to Christ. They form a definite whole, known to God the Lord alone and firmly established by God from the beginning. As the fulness of the Jews is the fulness of the elect from Israel, so the fulness of the Gentiles is the fulness of the elect from the heathen world. All whom God in time has called, converted and still converts from the Jews and Gentiles, they are the vessels of mercy, which He has predestined to glory. And their sum total is the fulness of the Jews and Gentiles.

What Paul teaches in agreement with the last prophecies of the Lord concerning the conversion of the heathen is the following. He, Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, first brought the Gospel of Christ, the Son of God, into the heathen world, and established among the Gentiles the obedience of faith. This Gospel, however, will be preached on earth until the end of the world as a witness unto all peoples. Matt. 24,14. And so at all times souls will be won for the Lord, first from this, then from that people. Through the whole New Testament era Christendom is gathered from all races of the earth. And when the last of the Gentiles, predestined to glory, are called and converted to Christ, then the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled; then the fulness of the Gentiles exists; then the fulness of the Gentiles has entered the kingdom of God. Luke 21,24.

And when it is stated that Israel in part has become obdurate until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in, it does not follow that when the designated time has been reached, obduracy will cease and Israel will be freed from their present fate and judgment. Only this much is clearly stated that obduracy will continue up until that time, that during the entire period of the conversion of the heathen Israel, the obdurate part, remains under the curse of obduracy. After the entrance of the fulness of the Gentiles a change of things is to be expected. Wherein this change consists will shortly follow of itself.

Verse 26: And so all Israel shall be saved. Spoken of is not the future salvation but the salvation which falls in time and consists in this, that Israel will share in the salvation in Christ, which coincides with conversion to Christ. In Eph. 2,1ff. Paul designates the conversion of the heathen, the awakening from spiritual death to spiritual life, as salvation, deliverance. This deliverance, to be sure, results in the future salvation.

It is here solemnly announced by the apostle that all Israel will be converted and saved. "All" refers to the entire whole, including all the individual parts. A mass conversion of the Jews is no conversion of all Israel. If one understands all Israel as all of natural Israel, nothing remains but the assump-

tion that all the Jews, who died in unbelief, will arise from the dead before the end of the world and will with those yet living be converted to the Lord. According to the newer interpretation the conversion of all Israel is identical with the conversion of obdurate Israel. That is a contradiction in itself and contrary to the context. According to the context all Israel is the sum total of the elect out of Israel.

According to the apostle's presentation, chapters 9-11, the following is the history of Israel's deliverance. God from eternity chose for Himself a people out of Israel, a fulness. And those whom He elected from eternity He in time called and converted. So there was at all times a remnant in Israel, a small group of the true children of Abraham and God, also during the worst periods of apostasy. At the time of Christ and the apostles this remnant, the elect, consisted of those Israelites who joined themselves to Christ and entered the Christian Church. Even later many Jews, who first did not believe, were provoked by the converted heathen to follow Christ. And so in the future some will always be won out of Israel until the fulness of Israel is completed and become Christ's own. And how can "all Israel" in this connection mean anything else but the fulness of Israel, the people whom God had before elected? And how can "all Israel will be saved" mean anything else than that the conversion and deliverance just of this fulness will finally be an accomplished fact? "All Israel" is identical with the fulness of Israel, with the people whom God had before elected. When the last of the elect of Israel will be converted to Christ, then are the remnants of all times brought together; and these remnants of all times form all Israel. This complete whole includes all the individual parts without exception.

This then is what Paul teaches. Israel is in part hardened. There are believing Jews who are not yet hardened. This partial obduracy of Israel will continue until the fulness of the heathen will have come in or until the end of the world, for according to Matt. 24, 14, the Gospel will be preached to the heathen until the end. And so, since the partial obduracy of Israel, which continues until the end, creates the possibility for a continued partial conversion of the Jews, there will at all times be some won from Israel, until then at the end of time the fulness of Israel exists. That only a part, to be sure, the greater part, of Israel is hardened makes possible the deliverance of the smaller part. God leaves Israel so long under the curse of obduracy because He according to His eternal decree desires to and must bring into his kingdom the fulness of the heathen before the end of time. Since obduracy only concerns part of Israel, more souls will always be converted to Christ from the unbelieving Jewish people during the course of time. And so the eternal decree of God is also aimed at all Israel.

When the fulness of the Gentiles has gone in and all Israel is saved, then follows for the fulness of the Gentiles and of the Jews life from the dead, eternal salvation; while the judgment of obduracy, which has befallen the greater part of Israel, will end in the judgment of eternal damnation. That is the change which will take place.

We can now understand in what sense and by what right the apostle calls this statement a mystery. In the New Testament

the truths of salvation, as far as they are revealed by divine revelation, are regarded as mysteries. These mysteries are embraced in that one mystery, that of Christ and His redemption. Col. 2,2; 4,3; 1 Tim.3,9.16. Then, also historical data are called mysteries, inasmuch as they were originally hidden to men and were revealed to the apostles by the Spirit and communicated by them unto the congregations. Thus the fact that the heathen are "fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ" is also called a mystery, Eph. 3,6. And so here the fact that Israel is only partially hardened and this partial hardening will remain unto the end, that from this partially hardened people there is continually a great gathering of believers until the end of days and in this way all Israel will be saved, is introduced as a mystery. No one could know that in this hostile people, apparently totally hardened, there were yet the elect, whose gathering was not yet completed through the evangelic preaching. This secret the apostle reveals to his readers.

Paul has already told his readers of Israel's obduracy, on the one hand, and of the deliverance of Israel, on the other. However, that Israel is only hardened in part and this partial obduracy, persisting until the end, gives opportunity for the deliverance of all Israel, he first states at the end of his historical presentation. Now it is clear what false thoughts the apostle wishes to prevent.

It was already remarked that one could think that the entire unbelieving Jewish people, which at the time of the apostle was opposed to the Christian Church, had incurred the judgment of obduracy and were lost without hope. And among the Gentiles such thoughts arose. So the apostle declares to his readers that these are erring thoughts and assures them that not all unbelieving Israelites were hardened at the time. There was still hope for Israel. There were some at their time who would be converted to Christ and be saved. And with this assurance he confirms the expectation that olive branches, which were cut off, will again be grafted into their own olive tree.

Verse 27:

As it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

This is a combination of various prophetic passages. The statement concerning the coming of the Deliverer is from Is. 59, 20.21. This chapter 59 is a reprimand which runs out into a threat of judgment against apostate Israel. The threat suddenly changes into a promise. Verse 20: "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." This promise concerns the remnant of Jacob. To them will the Redeemer come. And God's covenant, made through the Messiah with Israel, the remnant in Jacob, should consist in this that the Lord's Word and Spirit will constantly rule them. Israel will then be a believing, obedient people. Paul adopts the translation of the Septuagint and so ascribes the conversion of those in Jacob to the Redeemer. Thus the conversion of the lost sheep of the house of Israel is, e.g. Ezek. 34,11ff., presented as Christ's work. In that Paul says the Redeemer will come "out of Sion," he refers to such passages as Ps. 14,7. So he interweaves reminiscences

from other passages into the quotation from Is. 59. And that he does when he says that the new covenant should also consist in the forgiveness of sins. He points to such prophecies as Is. 27, 9; Jer. 31, 31ff. When the remnant of Jacob will be converted to Christ, the mighty God, then they will have salvation in Christ, the forgiveness of sins. The quotation, as Paul has it, prophesies the actual appearance of Christ and the work of converting the Jews, which He began during His earthly wandering and continued after His exaltation through His apostles and preachers, in order to complete it before His second coming, to complete it not with the last Jewish generation, but in and with the conversion of the last remnants from Israel.

Verse 28:

As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved. The unnamed subjects, of whom it is said that they are the objects of both God's hate and of God's love, are none other than the unbelieving Jews, whose conversion is yet to be expected. They are the enemies of God. They have God as their enemy, because they malignantly oppose the Gospel. "For your sakes" shows that in this way salvation fell to the heathen. The unbelief of the Jews in general, not only the unbelief advanced to obduracy, determined God to turn salvation to the heathen. On the other hand, concerning the election they are beloved of God. God loves them inasmuch as and because He chose them from the beginning, because they belong to His people in Israel, which He had before chosen unto Himself.

Verse 29:

They are beloved for the father's sakes. This the apostle explains in the words: For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. The context deals with a showing of God's grace, the call of the fathers. This was exhibited in the promise given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which promised salvation in Christ to them and their seed, the true seed. This promise cannot fail; it must and will be fulfilled unto the whole seed, because all showings of God's grace are immutable. Both reasons adduced for the love of God form a uniform motive. Election and call are correlatives here also. The latter is a result of the former. Because God has elected them from the beginning and has called them to salvation in Christ, in and with the promise given to the fathers, and because the purpose of such election and call will certainly be fulfilled, therefore, the Israelites whom the apostle has in mind, are loved now already by God, though they do not yet believe, even though God hates their unbelief.

Verses 30.31:

Paul continues: For as ye, ye Gentile Christians, in times past, in the time before Christ, have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief, which turned salvation to you, even so have these also now yet believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. The former disobedience of the Gentile Christians was that they as all heathen held the truth in unrighteousness. The present disobedience of the Jews was that they did not obey the Gospel, was

unbelief. The mercy of God is the mercy revealed in the conversion of Jews and Gentiles. The mercy, which the heathen experienced, should arouse the Jews to emulation. The apostle's meaning is this: If the unbelieving Jews sooner or later are converted to Christ, to them will be shown the same mercy which was shown to you Gentile Christians. What God has done to you He can also do to them who are now in the same condition in which you were before. He can change their disobedience into obedience, just as He broke your disobedience.

Verse 32:

For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. This concerns all the elect of the Jews and Gentiles. Them all God for a time left to their disobedience, so that He might have mercy upon them, bring them all at their time to obedience, to faith, and so make them partakers of salvation in Christ.

These words contain an admonition, which all Christians should take to heart. We should not regard all unbelievers, with whom we are in contact, as hopelessly lost men, even though they at times violently oppose the Gospel, but consider that God's mercy is inexhaustible and can also do unto others what it has done unto us. If we but forcibly attest the mercy which we have experienced by word and deed in our surroundings, then many a soul can still be helped.

In the historical discussion, chapters 9-11, the apostle had begun with the lament over Israel's rejection. Israel, whose prerogatives were so great, is accursed from Christ. They are now under the terrible judgment of obduracy, which they brought upon themselves by obstinate unbelief. And obduracy is the first step towards damanation. But not all Israelites are hardened and lost. God from eternity elected a people out of Israel, which he did not reject. From ages back He kept a remnant in Israel at all times. Now, during the time of the New Covenant a great number of Israelites have entered the Christian Church. And from the unbelieving Jewish people, who oppose the Church of Christ but are only hardened in part, many souls will yet be won for Christ at all times until the end of the world. And so finally all Israel, whom God chose for Himself, will be saved. "All Israel will be saved." That is a triumphant conclusion of the historical discussion, which began with the bitter lament over Israel's obduracy.

Inscrutable Wisdom of God

33-36

Verse 33:

The historical discussion, dealing with the fate of Israel and the heathen, is ended. An appendage is added. Looking back upon God's work among the Jews and Gentiles, the apostle breaks out in an exclamation of great astonishment: O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

God is rich in wisdom and knowledge. The wisdom of God sets the goal and chooses the means. And because God has knowledge, he knows the right means. The wisdom and knowledge of God are so rich that no man can grasp and estimate them, and the riches of divine wisdom so deep that human reason cannot fathom them. The infinite, unfathomable wisdom of God is revealed in its inscrutable judgments and undiscernable ways.

How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! The apostle has presented both in the preceding. The judgments of God are especially His judgments of obduracy, which result in eternal wrath. These witness both the righteousness and the wisdom of God. God can ensnare the opponents in their own traps, by giving them over into their corrupt minds and leaving them to their self-chosen corruption. And God can make the judgments upon the godless, the unbelievers, serve His world-plan. Unlike the judgments, God's ways are the gracious ways that lead to eternal life.

How wonderful and wise are His ways! One must indeed wonder at divine wisdom, considering how God has mercy upon the disobedient, how He gathers from the apostate Jews and the Gentiles a people of His own, how He converts some through others, that He uses the faith as well as the unbelief of some to turn salvation towards others, that He maintains the world so long in spite of the malice of men, until He has carried out His counsel of grace upon His elect.

And it is an infinite, unfathomable wisdom. They are inscrutable, incomprehensible judgments and ways. Indeed, we see the ways and judgments of God in history, and Scriptures also expressly point to them. It is also revealed to us in Scriptures, e.g., that the judgments of God are merited by men, and that the gracious ways of God rest in God Himself, in God alone. But that does not explain everything. The final reasons and motives of divine ways, works and decrees are and remain hidden. If we consider the destinies of peoples and of individuals and compare them with one another, questions and riddles arise, which we cannot, and Scriptures do not, solve. We cannot understand, for example, why God, who desires the salvation of all, converts some with the same guilt and corruption and gives others into their corrupt mind. But we should not investigate the cause of discrimination, since God has not revealed it to us.

Verses 34.35:

That the judgments and ways of God are inscrutable and incomprehensible to us, the apostle now confirms by three questions, which he takes from Scripture. Is.40,13; Job 35,7. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? There are only three instances whereby man could know what God has determined or How He will carry it out: if he looked into the heart of God, if he were given an interest in the matter, and if he could measure -and depend on- the recompense according to what he rendered God. But this is not the case.

Verse 36:

For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. All that is and happens has its origin in God, is executed by God and serves His purposes, finally serves to His glory. God is absolutely independent. He is the beginning, the middle, and the end of all things. Also evil, which is not from, but contrary to God, is included in all things, inasmuch as God according to His wise counsel permits it, limits, orders, directs, and makes it serve His purposes. And because everything is from, through

and for God, all cooperation, counselling and knowing with God are excluded.

Soli Deo Gloria! To whom be glory for ever. Amen. Thus Paul closes his exclamation and the entire discussion from chapters 9-11. He urges all Christians not to investigate, much less censure, but rather to worship the mysteries of God. We should glorify God for what He has revealed to us in His Word to our salvation and for His hidden wisdom. Even though it is now as yet hidden to us, we have the impression, nevertheless, that it is great, exalted, holy, divine, and worthy of adoration. Fuller and louder will the Soli Deo Gloria resound from our mouths when the veil falls, when in that life the entire counsel of God will lie revealed and uncovered before our eyes.

Chapter 12

The Christians' Life, a Reasonable Service Unto God

1 - 21

Verse 1:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God. Thus the apostle begins his closing admonitions. He desires to go into the details of Christian life and present how Christians are to prove their Christian life under various circumstances and relations. He admonishes the Christians by means of the mercy of God. What Paul has written thus far is a praise of God's mercy, of the grace of God in Christ. And the mercy of God towards the sinner, the mercy which the Christian readers, the brethren, have experienced and which has made them what they are, is also the right motive for Christian life. Therefore, in this and the following chapters follow true evangelical admonitions, which make the believing Christians willing and cheerful to do what they are admonished.

The apostle first admonishes the Christians that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Christians should present their bodies with all their members as an offering. The body as the organ of all life's moral activity should be placed into the service of God. The presentation of the body self-evidently includes also the surrender of the soul and heart to God. Yet Paul only mentions the body and not, as above, the body and all its members. 6,12.13.19. For he wishes to describe the different manner and way of applying Christianity to outward conduct and life. He wants to discuss what the presentation of the body and the members of the body all include.

The apostle has given sufficient instruction concerning the inner side of Christian life, the kernel and nerve of Christian sanctification. The sanctified soul, the renewed will of the Christian, which one cannot altogether disregard in the description of practical Christianity, appears here not so much as the object but rather as the subject of the presentation. The apostle turns to the believing, renewed ego of the Christian readers with his admonition. It is, to be sure, the person of the Christian, which does the right Christian works.

The offering is not to be taken especially as thank or burnt offering, occasioned by the sin and guilt offering of

Christ, but only comes into consideration here according to its general meaning, inasmuch as the sacrificer gives up all claim to what is his own and gives the same to God. Christians offer their bodies, since they do not consider them their own, which they can govern absolutely as they will, but which they give God and place in His service. This New Testament offering, as the animal-offering of the Old Testament, is holy in the sense of consecrated by God, and it is in the eminent sense of the word living and so especially pleasing to God, since here man gives his entire life to God, since all members of the body are active in the service of God. And the bringing of this offering is, at the same time, a reasonable service to God. It is reasonable in the sense of spiritual. In contrast to the purely outward Jewish, as well as heathen, animal-sacrifices, which could be also performed quite mechanically and thoughtlessly, the offering of one's body and life is a spiritual service to God, wherein the Christian is continually mindful of how he must use and rule body and members, so that God is thereby served and honored.

Verse 2:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed. Christians, who are inwardly free from, but who yet live in, this time and world, should not be conformed to this present period of time, should not conduct themselves as the times suggest, should not adapt themselves to evil customs, practices which now prevail in the world. They should rather transform themselves, fashion their conduct and life differently from the way it was fashioned before while they were children of this world. This transformation must permeate one's entire Christian life, since some portion of the old nature still clings to the Christian also, since he still has flesh and sin.

The transformation of outward conduct and life, however, takes place from within, as was also the case with the presentation of the body, by the constant renewing of the mind. By the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Natural man seeks only what pleases himself, what is good for the flesh. A Christian who is inwardly renewed, whose mind and heart are continually directed towards God, and who daily renews his mind, continually searches what the will of God is, what God just now in this present case wants of him and what is pleasing to Him under prevailing circumstances and relations. Just to this the perfection of divine will appeals, that the Christian in all situations of life, under all circumstances, conduct himself towards every one as is fitting for a Christian, as is right and good before God. What God desires of us, He has revealed to us in His Word, in His law. But the application of the law to concrete relations demands conscientious examination, sharpened and ready minds, a mind that is accustomed to God and divine things. The result of the constant renewing and testing is then that a Christian does what he recognizes to be good and pleasing to God and does the will of God. A conduct, meeting the demands of divine will and pleasure in all relations, is the right form of Christian life, while the children of this world are dominated by their own corrupt mind and will, by their sinful desires and inclinations. So the presentation of one's body and life to God,

that reasonable service to God, consists in doing the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God in all actions of body and members, in everything one does in life. It should not be forgotten that, as Paul pointed out in chap. 7, the doing of the most advanced Christian still remains far behind his desire.

Paul now begins to specify and explain this general admonition. The following section deals with the special gifts of grace, which were used in the Christian congregational-life. And Paul, therefore exhorts the Christians to manifest their Christian character within the congregation by the right use of God's gifts and to fulfill the good, acceptable will of God.

Verse 3:

He directs this exhortation to the Christians through the grace given unto me, by virtue of the grace given unto him. The special grace, which Paul received, was his apostleship. Rom. 1,5; 15,15; Eph. 3, 7.8. It entitled and obligated him not only to teach the Gentile Christians but to lead them to a God-pleasing conduct. So now he makes use of his gift by showing the Christians how they for their part must make use of their God-given gifts.

For I say to every man that is among you, for every Christian has his gift, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly. A Christian should not let his thoughts go higher, should not think higher, that is, according to the context, should not think of or consider himself more highly than is proper, not exceed the right measure, but rather be intent upon a discreet manner of thought. To think soberly is a sound, prudent, temperate way of thinking and reflecting, that includes modesty, self-moderation.

The right measure of self-esteem is given in these words: according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. Every one should so think of and consider himself as God has given him the measure of faith. Then he is prudent.

Measure of faith is not identical with the special grace or charism the Christian receives. In Eph. 4,7 Paul indeed speaks of a measure of Christ's gift: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." But here the apostle expressly speaks of a measure of faith, a special measure of faith which God has given to every Christian. To every individual Christian God has meted out a definite measure of faith, therefore, to different Christians a different measure. This and nothing else do the words say. Then this faith is not the trust in God's grace in Christ, not saving faith. That God in a definite measure distributes justifying and saving faith among men is nowhere taught in Scripture. If a Christian is weak in faith, that is his own fault and not lack of God's grace. Scripture only says of faith in the customary sense of the word that God works, Eph. 1,19; Col.2,12; or gives the same, Phil. 1, 29; but never that God measures out faith. The faith of which Paul speaks here is not the faith which makes a Christian a Christian, but something which is meted out by God to believing Christians after they have become Christians. As saving faith and God's grace are correlatives, so here faith and the special grace, with which this whole section deals. Faith, as used here, is simply trust, reliance. 1 Cor. 12,9; 13,2.

In order to make the right use of the special charism given him by God, a Christian needs a certain confidence, the conviction that God would have him with this his gift serve Him and His congregation, and the joy in such service. For entering upon and rightly fulfilling the office of the ministry, for example, next to the gift of and ability for teaching, joy in the office is necessary. A preacher must have the confidence that God has placed him in the office and that he with God can well carry out his work. This has been called "practical faith."

Such confidence, however, is of God. God it is, who along with the gift metes out to every Christian a knowledge of this gift and a corresponding measure of courage and confidence. And as the gifts are different, some greater and more important than others, so the measure of faith and confidence necessary for their right use vary. A bishop, for example, needs stronger confidence and spirit than an almoner. And thus every Christian should remain within the limits of his faith, well see in what sort of activity and service God has given him special joy, and well take care lest he follow his own impulses, lest he assume a role which he cannot fill and wherein he soon would become discouraged. Such self-examination and self-modesty according to the measure of faith include self-evaluation according to the measure of the gift, since faith is directed to the use of the gift and adapted to the same.

Verses 4.5:

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Just as we have many members in one body, the members, however, not all having the same function, so we the many, we Christians, are one body in Christ, in the communion of life with Christ, individually, however, members, every individual Christian a member of the spiritual body, of the congregation of believers. If the individual Christian is only a member of the body, then his function corresponds to his membership. Christians are members one of another. And as such, every Christian is called to serve the other members of the congregation.

Verse 6:

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us. Since we, according to the grace that is given us, have different gifts, we must make use of them in the right way, according to their calling. Paul had stated that the individual Christians as members of one body have different functions, every individual Christian has his special function. That, at the same time, implied different endowment. And because that is so, because every individual Christian has a special function and endowment, he is now also willing to make the right use of it. And every Christian is a member for the other, for the others' benefit, and so called and obligated for his part to serve the other members of the congregation and the whole congregation with his special gifts.

We Christians all form one body in Christ, but as members of this spiritual body, just as the members of the natural body, have different functions; or, we have different gifts, according

as we are mutual members, members one of another. This fact gives rise to a double admonition: first, every Christian should remain within the limits of his special gift and the measure of faith corresponding to the same; secondly, every Christian should exercise his special gift to the best interests of his fellow Christians.

The apostle enumerates individual gifts of grace and attaches special admonitions. Whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith. Some refer this prophecy to the gift of interpreting Scriptures, therefore, a gift which Christ has given the Church of all times. Others reckon this prophecy to the extraordinary gifts of grace with which the Lord endowed the primitive Church. The use of language must decide here.

Prophet in the New Testament, as in the Septuagint, is the established title of the Old Testament prophets. The characteristic of prophets was that God spoke with them and through them, that God gave them special revelation, which they should transmit to their people. Nu. 12,2: "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us?" Amos 3,7.8: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealed his secret unto his servants the prophets....The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" Hebr.1,1: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets," etc.

However, in the Old Testament, as in the New Testament, those prophets are especially called prophets who have left their prophecies behind in writing. The authors of the holy Scripture of the Old Testament are prophets. Their declarations are introduced in the New Testament as prophecies, and the prophets are said to have prophesied in speech and in writing. Matt. 15,7.8: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, "etc. Matt.11,13: "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." And how often Paul in our letter refers to the Old Testament prophets and their writings! 1,2; 3,21; 9,29; 10,5.16.19, etc. Inspiration, along with revelation, came to these prophets, Holy men of God spoke, moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Pet. 1,21; 2 Tim. 3,16. And so their Scripture is for all times the normative, inerrant Word of God. The chief content of their prophecy is God's economy of salvation. The prophets prophesied of the future grace, of the sufferings of Christ and the glory thereafter. 1 Pet. 1,10.11.

This is also true of the apostles of Jesus Christ, who are in the New Testament often coordinated with the prophets, 1 Pet. 1,12, and are themselves called prophets, Eph. 3,5. Only that the apostles proclaimed as fulfilled what the prophets prophesied. The Church of Christ is founded upon the Word of the apostles and prophets. Eph. 2,20.

Now, however, in the New Testament, especially in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Pauline epistles, prophets of a different kind are mentioned, who did not stand on the same level with the prophets of the Old Testament and with the apostles. On the other hand, they were also distinguished from the pastors and teachers of the congregation. Eph. 4,11: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pas-

tors and teachers." 1 Cor. 12,29: "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?" Not an office that was committed unto them, but a special gift, which was given them, made these men prophets. And this charism of prophecy the apostle ascribes to the wonderful workings of the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. 12,9-11: "To another (is given) the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit."

These New Testament prophets imparted to the Christian congregation prophecies which aimed at the promotion of God's kingdom, for example, the sending out of Barnabas and Saul for mission work, Acts 13,1-3; proclaiming imminent events, for example, the captivity of Paul, Acts 21,9-11; revealing the secrets of the heart, 1. Cor. 14,24.25. In the passages listed it is expressly remarked that the Holy Ghost spoke through them. Yet these were rather occasional expressions of the gift of prophecy. The usual function of Christians gifted with this charism was that they in open gatherings edified the Christian congregation with their utterances, teachings, exhortations, 1 Cor. 14,3. They were not the actual teachers of the congregation; they only prophesied when the Spirit of God came upon them and gave them revelation. 1 Cor. 14,29-31. Yet, the revelation, which the Holy Ghost imparted through them and which marked them as prophets, was something else than the solemn revelation of God's counsel of salvation, for whose organs and mediators the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles were called and which is laid down in the Scripture of the prophets and apostles. The latter was the basis and foundation of the former. The New Testament prophets in their prophecy moved within the sphere of the teaching of the apostles and prophets; they gave the congregation greater particulars concerning the already known, revealed divine truth, concerning this or that point of doctrine, gave deeper insight into divine secrets. 1 Cor. 13,2. Thus one can also say that they furthered the understanding of Scripture.

It is not wrong if one defines the charism of prophecy as an inspired, magnifying outpouring concerning divine things. It was somewhat similar to what Saul and his messengers experienced when the Spirit of God came upon them so that they prophesied. 1 Sam. 10,10; 19,20.23. Nevertheless, the New Testament prophets were not in the strict sense of the word inspired, as the prophets and apostles. Even if the Spirit of God did move them and give them revelation, what they spoke was not given to them verbally. In their prophesying their understanding was not inactive, unfruitful, as was the case in the speaking with tongues. 1 Cor. 14,14. What the Spirit revealed to them, the theme which he suggested to them, they discussed in a free manner, in their own words. So it could easily happen that in their prophecy they let their own and erring thoughts enter, so that a strange fire mingled with the light and fire from above. The elevated mood, into which the Spirit of God translated them, could degenerate into natural, carnal enthusiasm. Therefore, the apostle admonishes the Christians to judge and test the prophecy

which they heard, self-evidently according to the one and only norm, the Scriptures of the prophets, the preaching of the apostles. 1 Cor. 14,29; 1 Thess. 5,20.21. So the charism of prophecy, with which the Roman congregation was favored, was certainly the same as was found in the other Christian congregations, as in Thessalonica, Ephesus, and Corinth.

The apostle exhorts the Christians, who possess the charism of prophecy, to use it "according to the proportion of faith." Those who misunderstand the meaning of prophecy also misunderstand the meaning of faith as used here. They take faith as the Christian doctrine. Yet it is very doubtful whether faith is ever used in this objective sense in the New Testament. Faith here, as throughout Scripture, is simply the faith which believes, not saving faith, but in the same sense as "measure of faith" in verse 3.

Prophecy should stand in relation to faith, never that faith should stand in relation to itself or the individual parts of faith to one another. Also to him who prophesies God has given along with his gift a corresponding measure of faith, trust and confidence. And so he who prophesies should prophesy in relation to this his faith. In his prophecies he should exercise his confidence of faith. To that the admonition of the apostle is directed.

He who prophesies should be conscious and certain of this that the Spirit of God desires to speak through him, and so should be intent upon properly expressing in his free discourse, upon making clear and powerful, upon testifying confidently what the Spirit desires to say to the congregation through him. Thus he should desist from his own wisdom, from pomp and splendor of words, from straining after effect, avoid unsound pathos, to which an elevated mood could easily bring him. In imparting his revelation he must ever keep before his eyes the Word and Scripture of the apostles and prophets, as the rule and standard of his instruction and encouragement. The latter, however, the apostle does not wish to enjoin in our passage. In the present context he rather emphasizes that the prophet should make proper use of his charism to the welfare and benefit of the congregation.

Prophecy is the only extraordinary charism which is mentioned in this letter. The Roman congregation evidently was not as richly endowed with extraordinary gifts as was the Corinthian congregation, for example. These extraordinary gifts seem to have been discontinued in later apostolic times, since the Christian congregations became more and more accustomed to the regular preaching of the Word by the called pastors and teachers as the principal means of edification. This the apostle mentions in the following.

Verses 7.8:

Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation. This is an office which God has instituted in the Church of all times, the office of the Word; and its chief functions are public instruction and exhortation, which also privately fall to the lot of individual Christians and Christian families in their homes. The latter the entire presbytery carried out at the

time of the apostles, the former those presbyters who were fond of teaching, 1 Tim. 3,2, who especially labored in Word and doctrine, 1 Tim. 5,17.

Under our circumstances it is the pastor of the congregation who discharges this twofold office: preaching and the care of souls, exhortation, only that in the latter respect the congregational elders are at his service.

And the exhortation to the incumbents is: "Let us wait on our ministering, on teaching, on exhortation." To whom God has committed an office, show all diligence and faithfulness, remain in it and thus promote the welfare of the congregation and all its members.

Nevertheless, not only the prophets and pastors and teachers of the congregation but all Christians have a certain charism. He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity. Christians are all members one of another. The one is the member of the other and called to serve and aid the other with his gift. Every Christian is in the position to impart something to his fellow Christian from the greater or smaller treasure of his Christian knowledge and experience. And the giving of temporal goods is not excluded. However, he who gives should do it in simplicity, solely and alone with the intention of letting the others have a blessing, not with the additional intention of gaining something for himself, some kind of an advantage or praise and honor.

Also the privileged position that a Christian occupies, the advantageous circumstances in which a Christian finds himself, is assigned to him by God. He that ruleth is not to be referred exclusively and particularly to the presbyters and their activity in the rule of the congregation, but to each and every care and supervision which one in a higher position owes to the one intrusted to his care, e.g., parents to the children, teachers to the pupils, older Christians to the younger. He who rules should do it with diligence, should not rule according to convenience, but have at heart, in nothing neglect the souls committed to his care.

He that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. And he who finds himself in such advantageous circumstances should have compassion upon the poor, needy, suffering members of the congregation, to exercise mercy and help cheerfully. One should not be annoyed because he has to help them but be glad in love that he is allowed to and can help them.

Verse 9:

To the instruction to give, to have compassion upon the need of the suffering members of the congregation, there is fittingly added an exhortation to love. Let love be without dissimulation. This is a summary of the following admonitions. The apostle no longer speaks of the gifts of grace and not especially of congregational life, but rather of the relation of the Christians towards their fellow Christians and fellow men. And that is included in love. Love should be sincere, upright, and should come from the heart.

To such love without guile, which aims at the true welfare of the neighbor, however, belongs that one hates, abhors, and consequently also rebukes the evil in the neighbor, so that

he desists from it, and love, recognize and promote the good in his neighbor. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Verse 10:

The attributes and the conduct, wherein love manifests itself, now follow. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love. As for brotherly love, the love to fellow Christians, Christians should love one another as deeply and tenderly as blood-relatives, as parents and children. They are spiritually related, having the same Spirit and faith. And this bond is firmer and stronger and binds the Christians more closely together than the bond of blood-relationship the members of the family. Respect should be associated with heart-felt love. In honour preferring one another. Christians should honor and regard one another as companions of the same grace, and the one honor the other more highly than himself.

Verse 11:

Love, however, should not only rest in feeling but also prove itself in deed. Not slothful in business. Christians should be zealous, not indolent, show the brother all manner of good turn. And this zeal, if it is of the right sort, must come from within, dare not degenerate into outward bustling. Fervent in spirit; serving the Lord, or as another and better reading has it, "serving the time." This fervent zeal should be paired with quiet deliberation. We should not rush hastily but serve the time, go with the times and circumstances, test time and circumstances and regulate our rendering of service accordingly. Thoughtless zeal can only harm.

(We accept the reading "serving the time," even though the other reading "serving the Lord" is more attested, because it fits well into the context; while such a broad exhortation as "serving the Lord" would be unsuitable in this series of special exhortations.)

Verse 12:

There follow admonitions which are brought about by serving the time, which do not concern brotherly love but rather the Christian conduct in severe times. Rejoicing in hope, in that you rejoice and take comfort in your great, beautiful hope. Patient in tribulation, in the presence of tribulation. Continuing instant in prayer, which breakes through and conquers the press of tribulation.

Verses 13.14:

The following verses, which again return to brotherly love, are likewise connected to the exhortation to serve the time. Love should consider the different position and condition of the brother and thereto direct its services. Distributing to the necessities of saints, share in the necessities of the saints by making them your own and satisfying them through energetic help. Also exiled, homeless fellow believers one should help. Given to hospitality. The mention of strangers brings about the mention of enemies. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. That is an incidental and preliminary remark, which is again taken up later.

Verses: 15.16:

The apostle has the Christian brethren in mind when he writes further: Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Show the rejoicing, as the sorrowful, your heart-felt sympathy. Be of the same mind one toward another. One should intend for another the same as he would expect of the other were he in a similar position. Mind not high things, which pass over the heads of others and do not help anyone, but condescend to men of low estate. Go along with the humble, understand their position, their necessities, their powers of comprehension, become weak with the weak. The final and not the least detail of brotherly love is: Be not wise in your own conceits. Do not always follow your own mind but listen to others, also to the humbler brethren. It is for our good, and we thus help others; we win their trust, win influence over them when they see that we also take instruction and counsel from them.

After having brought forth the leading features of brotherly love, the apostle yet mentions the universal love, which Christians owe to all men, also to those who are without. And since they have nothing good to expect from non-Christians, who are hostile to God and Christ, but only evil, he places this admonition at the end.

Verses 17.18:

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Instead of letting themselves be provoked by evil to evil, they should rather aspire to the good and to peace in their dealings with the unbelievers. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Prov. 3,4. Be intent upon the good, upon a moral and honorable life, so that this good be evident as such in the eyes of all men, in your surroundings. And live peaceably with all men. To this the apostle adds: If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, and concedes that the objective impossibility of living peacefully can enter, namely, there where truth, justice, and duty prevail. Apart from this instance, Christians should, for their part, be prepared for peace. This does not exclude that the others without any cause may start war and frustrate our peaceful intentions and endeavors.

Verse 19:

Urgently and stirringly, by addressing his readers with "dearly beloved," the apostle opposes the retribution of evil. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves but rather give place unto wrath. The interpretation that their own enemy's wrath is meant requires no refutation in face of the quotation: For it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Deut. 32, 25. We Christians should give way to the wrath of God, let Him rule, instead of encroaching upon His rights through personal revenge. Meanwhile before the final wrath burns over our adversaries, who are also the adversaries of God and Christ, as long as we are yet on the way with them, we should have appeasing them and bringing them around at heart.

Verse 20:

Desisting from personal revenge, it follows: Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Prov. 25,

21ff. Just as little as one can remain insensible to glowing coals upon his head, will the enemy, who receives a good deed for an evil one, remain insensible to this, that he should not be troubled over what he has done and acknowledge and rue his injustice. He must be completely hardened, who is not moved by such evidence of the Christians' love for the enemy, in which God's love for the enemy is reflected.

Verse 21:

The apostle closes his exhortation to love the enemy with the words: Be not overcome of evil, which the enemy does you. Be not swept away to revenge and retribution, but overcome evil with good, by bringing it about that the enemy, shamed by your high-mindedness, abstains from dealing maliciously against you and becomes your friend.

Chapter 13

Obedience to Government

1 - 7

From the conduct of Christians towards their fellow men the apostle proceeds in his exhortation to the conduct of Christians towards temporal government, which also has its place in the general human sphere. There is proof of no sort for the assumption that the present admonition of obedience to magistrates was occasioned by the desire for freedom or by the revolutionary efforts of the Roman Christians, that the rebellious intention of the Jews aroused the Jewish part of the congregation. In the extensive and specific presentation of Christian duties, begun in chapter 12,1, the obligation towards the magistrates has its natural place. And it was very natural for Paul to remind just the Roman Christians of this, who lived at the seat of the world-power and constantly saw the misadministration of the royal court. Indeed, the apostle in his teaching concerning magistrates rejects the absurd thought as though the Christians, the members of God's and Christ's congregation, had nothing to do with temporal government and the affairs of state. Yet, that is a thought which Christians of all times might easily conceive. And so the apostle, once and for all, constitutes the divine right and divine office of government. At the same time, he prescribes the boundaries of temporal government. He here discusses the words of Christ: "Give unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are Gods

Verse 1:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. Every soul is every individual person. Therefore, every one should be subject to the higher power, that is, to the executive power, which we commonly call government. The higher powers refer not only to the magisterial office theoretically but to the government according to its concrete persons and members as the holders of the divinely-instituted office. This includes the whole magisterial power in its complex composition and organization, higher and lower officers, also local magistrates. In the concept of higher powers falls every manner and form of executive power,

republican as well as monarchical. Since it is a power set over man, government consists in making laws, regulations, executing these laws, and the subjection, therefore, in obeying and following governmental laws and regulations.

The motive for obedience to the government is this: For there is no power but of God. There is and would be no government, government would not be possible, had not God instituted it. No power on earth could, to any degree, keep within bounds the malice and the unrighteousness of men, who without exception harm and seek to ruin one another, if God's mighty arm did not stand behind it.

Therefore, the powers that be are ordained of God. A citizen of a land, also a Christian, need not first inquire and ascertain whether the government, which is placed over him, has assumed its office justly or unjustly. The question is not whether a government exists validly but merely whether it really exists. The real existence, the actual possession of power, is decisive here. Every government on earth, though it be illegitimate, which has the power and exercises the functions of state, is government ordained by God. And because the magisterial office is appointed by God and all existing governments on earth are ordained by God, therefore, every one, also every Christian, should be subject to the government within whose province he lives.

Verse 2:

He who opposes government opposes the ordinance of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. We are to think not only of governmental execution but also of the manifold punishments of God, which rebels bring upon themselves. History teaches in many examples that rebels have plunged themselves into misfortune and have often had a terrible end.

Verse 3:

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. The apostle further motivates his exhortation of obedience to government, which includes warning against disobedience, in that he adduces the purpose to which God ordained government. Those in power are indeed terror. Government is and remains a thing of force and an object of fear. Yet, only he who does evil need fear the government and its punishment, not he who does good. Paul is speaking of doing good and doing evil according to human concept and opinion, of civil righteousness and of gross unrighteousness, which makes man infamous as a citizen.

Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? You as a Christian regard it as somewhat unworthy to fear men. Very well; but do the good, as if fitting for you as a Christian and be honest with every man. Thus you will not have to fear the government. Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same, the praise of a good citizen and subject. For he (government and magistrates) is the minister of God to thee for good, verse 4. He is appointed for this purpose by God: to do good to, to protect and defend you who do good.

But if thou do that which is evil, and thereby also deny your Christianity, be afraid. For he beareth not the sword in

vain. Among the Greeks and Romans the sword was the insigne of autocrats, which they had carried before them in festive processions; and it is at all times the emblem of government. Executive power culminates in the power over life and death, in the power of punishment. The New Testament confirms the regulations which God from ages past had established for Noachian humanity, that whosoever sheds man's blood by men shall his blood be shed.

Yes, God Himself has given the sword into the hands of the government. For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. That is the purpose of government, of this divine arrangement. All governmental functions - legislative, executive, and judicial - aim at keeping down the transgressions of the evil-doer, without whom the law would be a dead letter, to such an extent that general peace, public order and welfare are not endangered.

In this manner good citizens and subjects are protected and kept secure. And this sacred purpose of government is for the Christians reason enough for submission. This purpose is, moreover, generally realized also there where rulers arbitrarily exercise and misuse their authority to their own advantage, where one can justly accuse a public office of corruption. It is the Lord's way that He rules and keeps the world, which is full of wicked scoundrels, in check through wicked scoundrels. A just, wise ruler, a just, wise government, is a blessing which, comparatively speaking, a people seldom has. But also without such trimmings Christians are satisfied and thankful if only public order is maintained to some extent by the magistrate and police, so that they can lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty, so that they can do their work and build God's kingdom in peace. Christians serve themselves, serve their own interests, the interests of their God, if they give unto Caesar, even unto Nero, the things that are Caesar's, and by obedience, civil virtue and integrity strengthen and promote the institution of government and its functions.

Verse 5:

Wherefore, because the government is ordained by God in order to punish evil-doers, prevent malice and protect the good, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, since one cannot escape the punishment of insubordination, but also for conscience sake. [The conscience of the Christians is normed by God and His Word. And the Christians know that the God, whom they call their God and whom the world does not know, has also established temporal government and through it carries out His will upon earth. Thus they obey government for God's sake.]

Verse 6:

For, on account of the reason presented in verses 2-4, for this cause pay ye tribute also. Governmental apparatus, management, administration of justice, police, the military, cost money. And the Christians should be ready - and true Christians are also willing - to pay their share, so that the government can exercise its functions. For they, the people in the government, are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing, continually engaged in checking malice and protecting the pious.

Verse 7:

Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due- the direct taxes; custom to whom custom -the indirect taxes; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. The government, including all those in government positions, is due fear because it bears the sword, and honor because it is the representative of God. But the obligation goes much farther. Christians should show honor and recognition to every fellow citizen who, because of his civil position or because of the service that he has rendered public welfare, deserves honor.

It is not necessary for the apostle to add to what he has written concerning the conduct of Christians toward government a remark and limitation such as this, that one should obey God rather than men. Acts 4, 19. In the present instruction such a limitation is a matter of course. If the higher power comes from God and the same should hinder evil according to God's will and make room for the good, a government publicly denies its divine authority and mission if it enjoins and desires to accomplish what is not right but evil before God; then obedience and submission are out of the question, for obedience for God's sake reaches only as far as the divinely-constituted authority reaches. And since the government is only appointed for the general human sphere, where good and evil live promiscuously and where malice wins the upper hand if it is not suppressed with might, a government thus oversteps the limits set by God if it makes regulations for the Church of God and Christ and desires to rule in the Church. And in this case it is the right and the holy duty of Christians to oppose the government, which here no longer stands in God's stead, self-evidently not by force but by refusing to do what is demanded. We enjoin upon our Christians also to obey unrighteous, tyrannical lords, who go beyond the limits of their authority, but only as far as the tyrants also perform the divine functions of government. Moreover, Christians, according to the example of Christ, should patiently endure the injustice which one does them, perhaps because of their supposed disobedience, and also in this case overcome evil with good.

Exhortation To Christian Charity

8 - 10

Verse 8:

Christians should pay to every one his due. But the principal duty towards the neighbor is and remains love. So the apostle once again comes back to the love of the neighbor. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another. This one thing, love, Christians must and should always owe their neighbor. Love is no payment of a debt, which one can pay once and for all, so as to be rid of the neighbor. The debt of love remains throughout the entire life. Love increases through loving; and the more it is exercised, the less can it be satisfied.

Verse 9:

For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The position of the sixth commandment before the

fifth is also found in Mark 10,19; Luke 18,20; James 2,11. One sees from this that the Lord and His apostles laid no stress upon the numbering and order of the commandments. It is not worth the trouble to go into the numerous conjectures, whereby some seek to explain this present arrangement.

Verse 10:

In what respect the individual commandments are comprehended in the commandment to love the neighbor, the following shows: Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. That he who loves his neighbor does evil to the same would in itself be a contradiction. He who loves his neighbor avoids all those offenses - through which the neighbor is harmed - mentioned in the commandments. Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law, really: the act of actual fulfillment. The apostle only brings forth the negative side of love, according to the negative composition of the commandments. He who does no evil to his neighbor does good to him. To do neither good nor evil to another is an impossibility. Paul only mentions the commandments of the second table of the law because he is only dealing with the conduct towards the neighbor. Self-evidently, true love for the neighbor exists only where the love to God has won room in the heart. The apostle only speaks of the fulfillment of all individual commandments, not of the perfect fulfillment of the law. According to what he wrote in 7,13ff., the Christian's obedience, fulfillment of the law, is still imperfect. The deed always falls short of the will. Nevertheless, inasmuch as a Christian really does good, the same extends over all commandments.

Exhortation to Walk in Light

11 - 14

A new admonition follows. Christians should walk in love and should walk in light, in holiness and righteousness, which is pleasing to God. Those are the two chief parts of the Christian's life, which Paul often combines with each other. Eph. 5, 1-9; 1 Thess. 5,1-9. From 12,17 on, Paul has in mind the relation of the Christians to their fellow men in general, to the non-Christian world. There, on the one hand, it was urged to exercise love, especially love to the enemy, to submit oneself to divine regulations which govern public affairs. on the other hand, to keep oneself unspotted from the world and its evil conduct. The latter he now wishes to enjoin upon the Christians.

Verse 11:

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep. Christians have knowledge of the time in which they live. With this reminder the apostle awakens their consciousness, which is easily darkened, concerning the time. Christians should pay attention to the time and not pass the time thoughtlessly but always set their eyes upon the hour-hand in the kingdom of God and well bear in mind what moment has now come for them. They know and should know and not forget that the hour is at hand to arise from sleep.

The apostle elsewhere speaks of sleep and awakening. Eph. 5,14: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." 1 Thess. 5,6: "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." This is spiritual sleep, which is not essentially different from spiritual death, the sleep in sin. Sleep is the condition wherein man lives ignorantly according to his desires, wherein he lives securely and carelessly in his sins. The heathen, the unbelievers, are those who sleep. And to awake, to arise from sleep means to renounce the former walk in sin, regard God and His will and then to live godly and righteously according to His will. Christians were awakened and arose from sleep when they became Christians. The hour of conversion is the decisive hour when man is converted from darkness to light, from unrighteousness to righteousness, from the power of satan to God. But the Christians entire life should then be a continual repentance. What was started in the hour of repentance continues in daily sanctification. This is the daily work of a believing Christian, who yet lives in the flesh and in the evil world: to renounce sin to which he is continually tempted, to arouse himself anew continually, to call to mind God and His will, to keep his eyes open and take care lest he become entangled in his former sins and lusts. And it is now time, the right moment, the hour is at hand for Christians in this sense to arise from sleep.

In what respect, why is it time for Christians to arise from sleep? For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed Our salvation is now close at hand. Be it close at hand, be it ever so near, it still is not here. Thus we are not to think of the salvation which has appeared in Christ, of the New Testament grace which has been revealed in the Gospel, of the day of salvation which is described in 2 Cor. 6,2, but of that salvation which is yet to be expected: perfect salvation, perfect blessedness, which will be revealed on Judgment-day, when Christ will come again, which we will on that Day receive from the hands of our Savior and will carry off as our gain. This our salvation is near, yes, nearer than when we believed, became Christians.

The apostle, however, wants to say more than that since the beginning of our Christian life, since our conversion, since our baptism, so and so many days and years have passed, therefore the Last Day, the Day of Salvation is brought closer by so and so many days and years. Our salvation has drawn closer also in this sense, that now nothing lies between us and our salvation any more, that we now have nothing else to expect than the beginning of salvation. When we became Christians, this great change from the state of wrath into the state of God's pleasure was before our eyes; we considered above all that we were free from sin, guilt and wrath, and had a gracious God; we believed that we were justified by faith in Jesus Christ. Gal. 2,16. Future salvation was only of secondary importance. Now, however, after we have come to faith and become righteous through faith, now that we have peace with God, our eyes are directed towards future, perfect salvation, which the Last Day will bring us. Nothing stands in the way of our salvation. We await only the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 1,7.

Verse 12:

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. The night has advanced, is rapidly disappearing; the day is close at hand. The moment is marked, since the night begins to waver, yield and make way for the approaching day, since one can already notice that day is breaking, therefore, the time of early day-break. The day which has neared is the Last day that brings us salvation. The Day, which the apostle otherwise calls "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. 2,5; "the day of Jesus Christ," Phil.1,6; "the day of Christ," Phil.1,10; "the day of the Lord," 1 Thess, 5,2; is here, as in 1 Cor. 3,13; 1 Thess, 5,4, simply called "the day." The Last Day, the day of the second coming of Christ, is the beginning of salvation, of eternal glory, the morning-gleam of eternity, the resplendent dawn. The Last Day along with God's salvation is the bright day which has relieved the night, which no night shall ever end.

The night which precedes the day is the time of this world. This time is like the night. It is ruled by sin and death. The prince of this world yet has his work in the children of unbelief. Inwardly the Christians are already free from this night, but they yet live, walk, and are active in this evil time, in this evil world. Of this night it is said that it is far spent, and of that Day that it is near at hand. This is the time in which we now live. It is the final hour. This evil time, this evil world, is inclined towards the end. Yet a little while and everything that still troubles and grieves us will pass away forever. The morning already dawns. The day is near. The Lord is near. Yet a little while and the Lord will come and with Him His reward, His salvation.

Considering the time let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. The apostle further explains what is meant to arise from sleep. As one in the morning takes off his night-dress, thus should the Christians put off the works of darkness. As one puts on his day-clothes, in which he is active during the day, as a warrior puts on his weapons in order to arm himself for the battle of the day, thus should Christians put on the works of light.

Darkness and Light are in Scripture the customary designations for righteousness and unrighteousness. 2 Cor. 6,14: "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" Works of darkness are works of malice, evil works, the "unfruitful works of darkness." Eph. 5,11. The works of light are the works of righteousness, good, God-pleasing works. Paul does not speak of clothes but of the weapons of light, because the walk in light, a pious, upright walk is always a conflict, a continual struggle with sin.

Christians put off the works of darkness when they became Christians, when they crucified the old man. 6,6. Christians have put on the armor of light, have entered a new life, a state of good works; in conversion and baptism the new man was created, Eph. 4,24. Nevertheless, Christians, since they live in the world and in the flesh and are hourly tempted to evil and so easily become lame in doing good, are admonished continually, every day anew to repulse evil works, which press upon them from within and without, before they are completed, and to be diligent in all good works, to persevere in battle, as they are also admonished continually to put off the old man and to put on the new man. Eph. 4,22-24. And considering the time in which they

live, they should determine continually and ever more completely to renounce the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

The night is far spent, is inclined towards the end. The time is not far off when God will judge and damn the world because of its evil works. Therefore, it is time to awake from sleep. Therefore, we should not hesitate and early put off everything that incurs judgment. The Day is near. Salvation is at hand. Therefore, we ought "to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God," 2 Pet. 3,11.12; therefore we should arm ourselves with the armor of light, so that we may be "sincere and without offense," "being filled with the fruits of righteousness." Phil. 1,10.11.

Verse 13:

Let us walk honestly, as in the day. The apostle summons the Christians to walk properly as in the day, to refrain from such things which one commits in the darkness of the night, with which, however, he would not venture forth into the light of day, but only to do such works which may be seen by every one. To walk honestly is to walk as is proper in view of the Day of Jesus Christ. Christians walk in view of the Last Day, whose beginning they await every day. And it is fitting so to walk that one also appears to be clean and without offense in the eyes of God.

Now the apostle names certain shameful things, which an honorable Christian life excludes. He enumerates certain of those works of darkness, with which Christians should have nothing to do. Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. Not in riotous living, in nocturnal feastings and drinking orgies, not in lasciviousness and debauchery, not in wrangling and jealousy. Those are works on which the children of this world, who walk in the darkness of this world, feast their eyes, with which the unbelievers fill up their existence. Their walk degrades into a filthy life of sensuality, of carnal enjoyment, of animosity. Such works do not tolerate the light of day, the light of Judgment day. Because of such works God's wrath comes upon the children of unbelief. Eph. 5,6. If Christians consent to such works, they renounce and lose their Christianity, faith and good conscience. And Christians should not suppose that they are absolutely above such things. The evil world, in which they live, attempts all means and tricks to draw them into this confused disorderly state. And they are continually lured and enticed by their own lust. Therefore, Christians must unceasingly watch, pray, fight, and need this earnest, powerful warning: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying!"

Verse 14:

Concerning the positive side of Christian life, concerning good works, the apostle says: But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. Long ago Christians put on Christ in baptism, when they became believers. Then they clothed themselves with Christ's work and merit, with Christ's blood and righteousness, as with a glorious dress. Gal. 3,27. It follows that they also put on Christ in sanctification, that they follow the type and example

of Christ. Christ lives in them and forms their life and conduct. Christ's bright virtues, Christ's simplicity, holiness, purity, uprightness, chastity, love, goodness, humility, compassion, friendliness, are evident in their lives. Therefore, adorned with the likeness of Christ, they go forward unto the Day of Jesus Christ, the day of salvation. And the call "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" serves and helps to further us in such a holy life and conduct, that we from day to day are renewed according to Christ's image and are glorified by degrees.

And make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof. The apostle forbids Christians to take care of the flesh, to affect tenderness for the flesh, which could only result in stirring up evil desires. Christians are still in the flesh, in the inherited corrupt nature. So evil desires can easily become active and grow in them and affect the life in Christ. And so they should see to it that this does not happen, should not aid the flesh but keep it within bounds.

Chapter 14

Conduct of the Weak and the Strong in Faith Toward One Another

1 - 23

Thus far the admonitions pertained to Christians in general. There now follows an admonition that concerns the conduct of the Roman Christians towards a specific class of their Christian brethren, the so-called weak in faith, as well as the conduct of the latter towards others who do not share their peculiarities. What the state of affairs was in Rome concerning the weak in faith is seen from the individual statements of the present chapter. And we settle the matter concerned best at the end of the discourse. We only observe here yet that it is very conceivable that Paul should be acquainted with the condition of the Roman congregation, since he could easily learn of this from his friends and acquaintances in Rome as well as from traveling Christians.

Verse 1:

Him that is weak in the faith receive ye. That this admonition is directed to the Roman Christians shows that the weak in faith constituted a small minority. But not to doubtful disputations, to foolish or perverse thoughts. If Christians have real fraternal intercourse with the brethren who are weak in faith, instead of rejecting them, they will not criticize the thoughts and opinions of those brethren and will thus prevent dissension. The apostle, above all, wants to preserve peace within the congregation.

Verse 2:

For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Some, the strong, who were in the majority, ventured to eat all foods, also meat, without fearing any harm therefrom, harm for their souls, and their spiritual welfare. without fearing to offend God. They ate everything

with good, firm conscience. This believing is not the faith in Christ, not saving faith, but trust, confidence. Here that confidence is meant which concerns the activities of the Christian, the moral conviction that what he does is not displeasing to God, not harmful to Christianity. To be sure, this confidence has its roots in saving faith. Only a believing Christian, who knows that he is reconciled to God through Christ, is intent upon not grieving his God in any way, upon not endangering his life of faith. Faith in Christ and through Christ in God brings with it that a Christian only does and is diligent in doing what, of which he is convinced in his conscience, is right before God and wholesome or at least harmless for him. Of this the strong in faith, of whom Paul speaks, were convinced with regard to the eating of meat.

The weak in faith, on the other hand, had a weak conscience, strong qualms of conscience, in this respect. They were doubtful. It was not quite safe for them to eat meat. They feared it might not be pleasing to God and a hindrance to their spiritual life.

Verse 3:

The apostle admonishes both parties. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth. He who eats, eats meat with all confidence, should not despise or esteem lightly him who does not eat, because he makes such outward things, as eating and drinking, a matter of conscience. On the other hand, he who does not eat should not judge and become suspicious of him who eats, as though he were a poorer Christian, as though he did not regard his Christianity very seriously. The reason: For God hath received him. the brother who permits the eating of meat. He likewise stands in the grace of God.

Verse 4:

Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? It is not proper to judge a Christian brother, who belongs to Christ, who is Christ's own. Christ is here thought of as the Lord, the Master of the house, and the Christians are His household. To his own master he standeth or falleth. It is the Lord's matter; it depends upon the Lord whether His servant stands or falls. This does not refer to the standing and non-standing in judgment but to the remaining and non-remaining in obedience, in Christian life. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. God is very well able to uphold, in the manner begun, such a brother who eats and enjoys everything, about whose Christianity and steadfastness the weak are concerned.

Verse 5:

Another difference between the strong and the weak in faith is brought forth. One man esteemeth one day above another. The weak in faith selected one day in preference to another, not as a fast-day, but as a prayer-day or festival-day, for the purpose of serving the Lord especially on this day, of spending more time on this day than on others, in prayer, praise, thanks, and other spiritual practices. For their growth in spiritual life they thought they needed such special means of stimulus, such definite days of prayer.

Verses 5.6:

Another esteemeth every day alike. These were the stronger. To them every day was a day of prayer and a festival-day, in that they every day alike prayed and meditated upon God's Word.

To everyone, to him who makes a difference in days as well as to him who regards every day alike, the apostle says: Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. Let him be certain that just as he will have it, is it best for him. With full right the apostle can leave each to his own opinion and ways, because in respect to real Christian conduct, the conduct to the Lord Christ, there is no difference between the two parties. For he that regardeth the day, just that day which he singles out in preference to others, regardeth it unto the Lord, thereby wants to serve the Lord, in that he consecrates just this day to the special service of the Lord. And he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. Also the other, who regards every day alike but who sanctifies every day through prayer and God's word, desires to serve the Lord.

He that eateth, eateth to the Lord. By eating all things, also meat, he makes use of his Christian liberty, the liberty that he has in Christ. Thereby he honors the Lord Christ. This eating serves to the glory of God, for he giveth God thanks for all food. This latter expression is the customary designation of table-prayer. Matt. 15,36; 26,26; Acts 27,35; 1 Cor. 10,30; 11,24; 1 Tim. 4,4. And he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. As the eating so also the non-eating is done to the service and glory of the Lord. The weak abstained from the enjoyment of meat, since they thought that they were thus the better fitted for prayer and divine worship. Nevertheless, they also thanked God for the food they allowed themselves, the vegetables. So here the same relation, the same position to Christ and God as before. The one, as the other, is diligent in serving Christ and seeks only the glory of God. In respect to their Christianity there is no difference between the weak and the strong.

Verses 7.8:

That the mind of the Christian is always directed to the Lord, whether he observes a definite day or regards every day alike, whether he eats or not, is evident from this, that the Christian's entire life, yes, his life and death are consecrated and dedicated to the Lord. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. The discourse is not concerning the Christian's relation to Christ, that life and death depend on the Lord, are in the hand and power of the Lord, but concerning the Christian's subjective conduct to Christ. In everything we Christians do during our lifetime, in all our activity we serve the Lord and glorify Him also in our death. To be sure, death is a happening. However, it can also be considered as our own deed and conduct, since we Christians die willingly, willingly follow the Lord's call when He calls us from this life, and commend our souls joyfully and confidently into his hands.

Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. This is the objective relation to the Lord. Our subjective conduct to the Lord presupposes the objective relation in which we stand to Him. The former is the result and effect of the latter.

We are the Lord's own as long as we live and remain the Lord's own even when we die, beyond death into all eternity. Our relation to Christ does not cease with death, is not altered in the least. No one and nothing can tear us out of His hand. There is nothing that can separate us from Jesus - be it life or death. Of this subjective and objective relation to the Lord every believing Christian gives evidence when he prays: "Lord Jesus, to Thee I live; Lord Jesus, to Thee I die; Lord Jesus, Thine I am living and dying."

Verse 9:

That we are the Lord's own in life and in death is guaranteed by His Death and resurrection. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. The purpose of Christ's death and resurrection was that He in life and death would be our Lord, and we His own. With His death Christ redeemed us and thereby merited and won us for His own. Through His death He has won the seigniorial right over us. And after His resurrection He really made us His own through Word and Spirit, drew and converted us to Himself, so that we now belong to Him who arose from the dead. 7,4. And He is and remains our Lord; and we are His own, even when we die, as long as He lives - and He lives and rules in all eternity.

From all that it follows how unseemly it would be if Christians wanted to quarrel because of the difference in eating and non-eating. The contrast between living and dying, which goes far beyond the contrast between eating and non-eating, the great contrast between death and life is for our conduct to Christ and for our relation to Christ quite all the same. We serve the Lord and are the Lord's own, whether we live or die. Much less can the lesser contrast, between eating and non-eating, be of moment for our conduct and relation to Christ. Thus it should be an easy thing for Christians to disregard such trifling differences!

Verses 10.11:

And so the apostle comes back to his previous warning: But why dost thou judge thy brother? namely, the stronger. Or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? namely, the weak. This warning he strengthens with a reference to the future judgment. For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, 2 Cor. 5,10. For God will judge the world through Christ. The Father has committed all judgment unto His Son. John 5,22. That we all will be placed before God's tribunal God already testified through Isaiah the prophet, Is. 45,23. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God, namely, that God alone is the Lord and Judge. At that time all will pay homage and swear allegiance to the Lord Jehovah as to their God and Judge. The prophet Isaiah has in mind all the heathen who will be converted to the Lord, 45, 22.24.25, as also Paul in the whole context only speaks of Christians. And that Isaiah in this quotation also points to the Final Judgment is seen from the words: "and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed." Is. 45,24.

Verse 12:

From what has been said it follows: So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Judgment-day is, as such, also a day of reckoning. Every Christian will also have to give an account of himself to God. In what respect God, the Judge, will also inquire concerning the works of the Christians, namely, inasmuch as they are proofs and fruits of faith, has been shown above. 2, 6-16. And now he who constantly keeps the day of reckoning before his eyes, on which day he will have to answer to God for all his deeds, will soon overcome the inclinations to go into judgment with his brethren because of such outward things as eating and non-eating.

Verse 13: The apostle concludes the previous exhortation, which applied to both parties, in one short statement: Let us not therefore judge one another any more. Also the contempt, the disdain, of which the stronger easily became guilty towards the weaker, implies an unfavorable judgment upon the brethren.

The recapitulation introduces the following warning: But judge this rather. Let this be your maxim: That no man put a stumblingblock, by which he is ruined, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way, through which he is lured to sin. This warning, which runs through the entire second half of the chapter, is directed to the stronger, while in the first half the weak were especially admonished.

Verse 14:

The following declares in what respect the stronger could easily give offense to the weak. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that is Christian, divine assurance, which has its roots in the fellowship with Christ, that there is nothing unclean of itself. No food, also not the meat of animals, is unclean and defiles the Christians. The enjoyment of any food, also the enjoyment of meat, is well consistent with the character of the Christian's sanctification. A Christian does not defile himself or sin if he eats any kind of food.

However, there is a restriction. But to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. One who thinks that some kind of food is unclean and defiles him, one who thinks that he sins if he eats meat, he indeed sins if he eats it. Not that the food defiles him, but because he violates his conviction, his conscience, concerning food. And just to this his brother leads him if he asserts his opposite conviction inconsiderately, if he impudently and boldly eats meat in his presence and so by his example provokes him to emulation.

Verse 15.

But if thy brother be grieved (be wronged, be injured) with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. The weaker brother, who is determined and misled by the stronger, for his part also to eat, thereby harms and violates his conscience. By his eating, the stronger brother has caused such injury of the conscience and is held accountable. It appears that he does not walk in love any more. Yes, by his inconsiderate eating he can bring about the complete destruction of the weak brother. For whoever first deals contrary to his conscience in one matter and becomes accustomed to offending his conscience can finally completely and forever lose good conscience and faith. And so then

to the stronger brother goes the earnest admonition: Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. It cost the life of Christ to save your brother from destruction, and you will not deny yourself the food to preserve your brother from damnation?

Verse 16:

Christians should guard themselves against offense, not irritate their weak brethren and well be on their guard lest they give offense to those without. Let not then your good be evil spoken of. The apostle again turns to the Christians in general, also to the weak believers. He now has in mind the relation of Christians to unbelievers. He speaks of the good or of the treasure of the Christians, that is, the Christian's possession of salvation, or the Gospel of Christ through which salvation is mediated. And he admonishes the Christians not to give unbelievers occasion to despise their good. To this the Christians give occasion when they quarrel with one another about their eating and drinking. That leads non-Christians to think that the Christian religion, according to the teaching of the Gospel, depends on such outward things, that, according to the opinion of the Christians, salvation depends on whether one eats or drinks or does the opposite, and thus provokes their mockery.

Verse 17:

Paul reminds them of the essential items of Christianity. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The kingdom of God, to which the Christians belong, which is made up of the Christians, does not treat of eating and drinking, but of these great things, the important things: righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Many exegetes find in these three expressions a description of Christian conduct, the ethical constitution of Christians as members of God's kingdom. But Paul never considers joy in the Holy Ghost as a Christian virtue; and so righteousness cannot mean the righteous conduct of the Christians, and peace cannot mean the peaceful intention towards the neighbor. But righteousness is here the righteousness which avails before God, the righteousness of faith; peace is peace with God; and joy in the Holy Ghost is the joy which animates the justified Christians, which the indwelling Spirit works in them. These are the essential properties of the kingdom of God.

Verse 18:

For he that in these things (rather: in this, in this condition as justified Christian) serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. This does not say that a Christian serves Christ in and with righteousness, peace and joy. These are not Christian virtues but the blessings of Christianity. That a Christian serves Christ is rather the result and effect of righteousness, of peace, of joy in the Holy Ghost. He who has become righteous before God through Christ, who has peace with God through Christ, who from his heart, in the Holy Ghost, rejoices in the salvation in Christ, he then also serves the Lord Christ with all the powers of body and soul. Yes, such an one who, in this condition as a justified Christian, serves Christ is pleasing to God and approved of and acceptable to men.

The service, which a Christian renders Christ, consists in an upright Christian life and conduct, in Christian works and virtues. This service is, therefore, also evident to the eyes of men and not only pleasing to God but also aids in effecting recognition and esteem for Christianity among those without, in putting to silence the ignorance of foolish men, in preventing slander. 1 Pet. 2,15. The reminder both of the relation, in which the Christians stand to God, and of the resulting Christian conduct and its effect upon the non-Christians is an inducement for the Christian to take to heart and to follow the apostolic admonition.

Verse 19:

From this Paul draws the conclusion: Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things where-with one may edify another. Because we through Christ have peace with God, we should also serve Christ by keeping peace among one another and by edifying and strengthening one another in Christian faith, life and conduct, instead of wrangling about unimportant things and harming one another. Thus the apostle comes back to his exhortation and warning begun in verse 13.

Verse 20:

Christians are exhorted to edify and not to destroy. And so the apostle once more enjoins upon the strong in faith: For meat destroy not the work of God, the work which God also has in the weak brother. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. All foods are clean. One can enjoy them all without sinning. But that food is harmful for him who eats under or with offence, since he experiences a moral offense if he enjoys it, can only enjoy it with the violation of his conscience. And just to this you mislead the weaker brother by your example and harm him, indeed destroy the work of God in him.

Verse 21:

On the other hand, it is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. In this way you safeguard your brother from harm and destruction. It is not that the strong in faith should act as is proper for his own person but that he should do no harm but good to the weak brother. We learn here that the weak in faith also made drinking wine a matter of conscience.

Verse 22:

The apostle gives the strong in faith to consider further: Hast thou faith? You have faith, the certain confidence that you do right when you eat meat or drink wine. Have it to thyself before God, and do not display it before the brethren. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth, accepts, of which he approves. The strong in faith accepts all food and drink and enjoys them, also meat and wine. And he is called happy, fortunate, and he should be satisfied that he in this respect feels free and not bound in his conscience, but he should not force his liberty upon the weak brother. This implies that the stronger may well make use of his liberty in case no danger of offense exists. For Paul expresses it just so, that

the self-same one actually takes the food and drink, which the other rejects, and congratulates him that he need not condemn himself on that account.

Verse 23:

What sad results there are, on the other hand, if the strong in faith through inconsiderate and unsparing use of his liberty misleads the weak brother in eating and drinking. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat. Till now the apostle had said that the weak in faith regarded the eating of meat as unclean and that he could only, therefore, eat meat with the violation of his conscience. Now he does not speak of a bad, but of a doubting, uncertain conscience. If the weak brother sees the strong eat meat and drink wine freely and easily, that can have a twofold result: either he emulates him with a bad conscience; or he vacillates, becomes irresolute, not knowing whether he dare and should risk it, and before he himself is clear concerning the matter, he finally eats and drinks with a doubting conscience.

And the apostle asserts that he also in the latter case sins and condemns himself by the deed. Because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. He does not do it in the certainty that he is doing right. However, whatever someone does without being sure of doing right, fearing that it might be wrong, that is sin.

The reminder and admonition, which the apostle in this chapter directs both to the weak and to the strong in faith in Rome, contain an instruction concerning the so-called adiaphora and give the right directions concerning the use of middle things, that is, things which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word, which are left to Christian liberty. The eating of meat and the drinking of wine were not forbidden in the law, were neither forbidden nor commanded the Jews in the ceremonial law. To set aside one day instead of another -this has nothing to do with the Old Testament celebration of the Sabbath- is neither commanded nor forbidden in the law. And what Paul teaches concerning the enjoyment of meat and wine and the choice of days in true of middle things in general.

First, a misunderstanding is to be avoided. Middle things, also called indifferent things, lie in neutral territory, so to speak. But it does not follow, therefore, that a Christian steps out of his Christian state and assumes a neutral position when he engages in these things. A Christian serves the Lord and is the Lord's, even when he eats or drinks or rests. Whatever he does or leaves alone he does or leaves alone to the Lord. He lives to the Lord and dies to the Lord. Sanctification embraces the Christian's entire life. Nevertheless, concerning adiaphora his actions are left to the choice and liberty of the Christian. Here every Christian may have his own thoughts and deal according to his own judgment. He has the right to use these things. However, he is also not prevented from refusing them if he so regards it as good and wholesome. Only, every one should be firmly convinced in his own mind that he can best serve God in the way he chooses. The axiom: "Let every man be persuaded in his own mind," is only valid in the sphere of adiaphora, not in the sphere of the revelation of truth, not where the conduct of

of the Christians is already beforehand regulated by God's Word. It would be a terrible misuse of God's Word if one would say to a manifest transgressor of the law or to a heretic: "Let every man be persuaded in his own mind." Difference in middle things does not concern the conduct and relation of the Christian to the Lord and does not harm fraternal understanding. Uniformity in middle things is not necessary for the unity of the Church. The apostle is interested in safeguarding peace within the Roman congregation. Therefore, he admonishes both sides, in spite of the existing differences, to receive one another as brethren, and earnestly warns them not to despise or to become suspicious of, and to find fault with, one another.

This admonition and warning concern all Christians, if there are among them different opinions and different practises concerning adiaphora. One should let the other have his own opinion. That is not detrimental to peace if otherwise Christians are one in faith and in obedience to God's Word and live in peace and love with one another. The criticism, to which a Christian is justified, yes, is obligated, reaches just as far as God's Word reaches. If a Christian teacher teaches and a Christian brother lives otherwise than God's Word teaches, then Christians should rebuke and judge him by God's Word. It would be false toleration and love of peace if one would permit open contradiction to God's Word. If we, however, have no clear, fixed Word of God, which we can hold before the brother, then we should not go into judgment with him because he in this or that matter thinks or deals otherwise than we. Here applies: "To his own master he standeth or falleth."

It is not excluded that one may teach a Christian brother, who makes a middle thing a matter of conscience and worries himself to death with unnecessary scruples, and attempt to deliver him from his fear, just as the apostle declares to the weak in Rome that no food is in itself unclean. But one should not force the weak brother and finally leave him alone if he persists in his opinion. The apostle does not place the apodictic demand upon the weak in Rome that they must completely give up their scruples, but according to his entire discussion he rather presumes that the difference between the weak and strong, the difference in middle things will continue to exist, perhaps always. In short, one should let middle things be middle things, indifferent things.

There is, however, a time when a middle thing ceases to be a middle thing. That is: circumstances can arise, under which the use of a middle thing becomes sin. This the apostle also enjoins in this chapter. If a scrupulous Christian things that a certain thing, in itself a middle thing, is not directly forbidden by God but is not quite safe for him, would not further, but hinder, his soul and the welfare of his soul, his intercourse with the Lord, then in spite of this made use of this thing with reluctant and doubting conscience, he thus sins since he violates his conscience. On the other hand, if another Christian, who has a stronger and freer conscience, inconsiderately uses his Christian liberty and freely and openly does something which in itself is not wrong, at which, however, he knows his weaker brother would take offense, he thus sins since he violates love. Inversely, we do right and well if we insist on our Christian

liberty over against strong and proud spirits, who truly do not belong to the weak, who want to lay a middle thing, their own fancy, upon your conscience, and do just what they would forbid us to do.

If a Christian congregation rightly considers and follows the apostolic norm concerning middle things and their use as laid down in Rom. 14, it will stand it in good stead. Thus will love and peace be preserved, if the congregation otherwise is right in essential things. The remark is yet hardly necessary that Christians must be sure that middle things, which are current as such, are really middle things, and be on their guard lest they place on the free-list obviously sinful joys, enjoyments, pleasures, practises next to eating meat and drinking wine and similar things.

Chapter 15

Admonition to Patience and Harmony

1 - 13

Verse 1:

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. The weak are no longer the weak in faith, but the weak in general, and these are contrasted to the strong in general. The strong, really, the able, the robust, are those Christians who enjoy a sound, powerful Christianity, though not being perfect for that reason. The weak, really, the impotent, the feeble, on the other hand, are such Christians, who suffer from special, habitual moral infirmities. It is purely arbitrary if one identifies the strong with the heathen Christians and the weak with the Jewish Christians. Paul, who was an Israelite, counts himself among the strong. And it is the duty and obligation of the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak, that is, to take them upon themselves in order to heal them.

Verse 2:

And not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. The apostle warns the Christians not against common self-complacency, egotism, self-love, but against being concerned merely about their own spiritual life. We should not be satisfied with our own spiritual well-being, but also lend a helping hand to the improvement and edification of our neighbor.

Verse 3:

For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. Christ did not, and did not live to, please Himself, was not satisfied with His own holiness. While He walked on earth, He did not make a show of His divine glory and majesty, but was concerned about the welfare, salvation and deliverance of the poor, sinful children of men and did not take offense at the reproaches of God's adversaries, as was already prophesied in Ps. 69,10. Though He was holy and full of grace, He did not

despise us and also did not boast, as the Pharisee, that He had something which we did not have. This example we should emulate. It was not too much for Him to endure offense for our sakes. Why then should it be too much for us to burden ourselves with the infirmities of our brethren?

Verse 4:

The application of the quotation from the Psalm the apostle justifies with the remark: For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning. Everything that was written before in the Scriptures of the Old Covenant was written for our present life. Moses and the prophets did not only serve their contemporaries, their people, with their writings. The Holy Ghost, the real Author of Scriptures, intended them also for us, the children of the New Covenant. Scripture, and that is also true of the New Testament scripture, is the teacher of the Church of all times.

One might wonder why Paul, after he has already introduced so many words of Scripture, now first declares that Scripture is intended for our instruction. For from the beginning Christians have regarded Christian doctrine, the Gospel of Christ, in no other way than in connection with the Old Testament Scripture. But it is to be noted that the apostles repeatedly enjoin such well-known basic truths, as that Scripture is God's Word and the source of all doctrine, since it was known to God's Spirit, who spoke through them, that the enemy of God and of men, the enemy of salvation, at all times works to destroy the foundation of faith. It is very opportune that Paul, after he has proved all the chief points of his teaching and exhortation with Scriptural quotations, now at the end of his discussion expressly alludes to this that such application of Scripture is the purpose of Scripture, as he already in the beginning of this letter brought forth the agreement of his Gospel with the Scriptures of the prophets.

Nevertheless, the apostle does not speak in general of the right use, profit and blessing of Scripture. This verse is not a digression from the theme, nor is the following verse a return to the theme, as many exegetes will have us believe. This statement of Scripture stands in close relation to the admonition of verse 1, that we Christians should bear the infirmities of the weak and not live to please ourselves. That everything written before was written for our learning is closely modified by the following purpose-clause: That we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. According to the context, we have to think of that instruction which the Scriptures impart concerning Christian conduct.

Accordingly then, Scripture, because it is God's Word, at the same time works in us what it teaches us, whereto it admonishes us; Scripture makes the man of God thoroughly furnished unto every good work. And so Scripture also especially works patience, in that it exhorts us to patience, and it gives us the courage, confidence and joy, by holding before us, e.g., examples of patience, as the example of Christ, to take upon ourselves what we, as Christians, should take upon ourselves. The patience and comfort of Scriptures are the patience and

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comfort which they instill in us. In this manner we should and actually will be placed into the position to hold fast to the hope, to the hope of future glory, which awaits us at the end of this trying life upon earth. Patience works experience; but experience works hope. 5,4. This patience, however, is not patience in general, patience in cross and suffering, but the enduring and bearing of the infirmities of the weak, which is aimed at the healing of these infirmities. This constant work of love, this daily pulling out of splinters and thorns, is also an affliction, a burden, of which we often would like to rid ourselves. If we, however, diligently search Scripture, then we from day to day obtain from the same new power, comfort and encouragement, courage and confidence, and keep the blessed goal firmly fixed before our eyes, when we then with our brethren, free from all infirmities and burdens, will rejoice in our salvation.

Verse 5:

The apostle closes this admonition, begun in verse 1, with the wish: Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus. The same epithets are now attributed to God, as were first attributed to Scriptures. As the previous discussion was concerning the patience and comfort of Scriptures, so God is now called the God of patience and comfort. Scriptures, which come from God, are of divine origin. The effect of Scriptures is God's effect. God reveals and gives Himself to us through Scriptures, and through Scriptures, through the teaching of Scriptures, imparts patience and comfort. And now the apostle wishes for his Christian readers that the God of patience and comfort would grant them to be like-minded toward one another, that is, to regard one another as brethren and be brotherly minded toward one another. Such fraternal harmony is the foundation and basis for mutual advancement and edification, and is, moreover, a jewel and ornament of the Christian congregation and pleasing to God. It is fitting for Christians to be in harmony "according to Christ Jesus," that is, not according to the example of Christ, but according to the will of Christ, who has requested of His own that they all be one. John 17, 11.

Verse 6:

In this way it comes that they with one mind and one mouth praise God. That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is proper, God-pleasing worship that the entire congregation, as with one mouth, with one mind and heart, praises the God and Father of Jesus Christ, who through their Lord Jesus Christ also is their God and Father. Also in Eph. 1,3.17 God is called not only the Father, but also the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. God stands in a unique relation to Christ and so in the relation that He is the Father of Jesus Christ.

Verse 7:

Wherefore, so that the purpose of glorifying God with one accord be attained, receive ye one another to Christian fellowship; live and deal friendly and brotherly with one another. Christians in common are addressed here. The difference

between strong and weak was brought to a close at the end of the preceding section. Receive one another as Christ also received us. The same persons are meant as before, the Christians. Christ has received us in love to the glory of God. We Christians are "called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Cor. 1,9. So we are obligated to maintain and foster fellowship among one another.

Verses 8.9:

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to conform the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. Christ first served the Jews, then also the Gentiles. Christ first became a servant of circumcision. In the days of His flesh He served and preached to the Jews. He was sent just to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matt. 15,24. Through His Word He gathered a company of disciples about himself. The apostles of Christ then continued the ministry of Christ in the circumcision, since they proclaimed the Gospel of Christ first to the Jews and established in Israel the Church of Christ. The service is still the same: "As Christ also received us."

In the manner stated Christ served the Jews "for the truth of God," in the interests of the truth, of God's truthfulness, to the glorification of divine truthfulness, namely, to confirm the promises of the fathers. The fathers of Israel had received the promise. By His promises God had obligated Himself to Israel, so that Israel had a sort of first claim to Christ and the salvation in Christ. Indeed, the promise was given out of grace. Yet, after God once had given it freely, gratuitously, He was obligated to His truthfulness also to fulfill it. And now the believing Jews, who followed Christ, or rather whom Christ received into His fellowship, have shared in the promised salvation and praise God for His truthfulness.

Of the Gentiles, on the other hand, the apostle says that they praise God for His mercy. To the Gentiles was given no promise. To be sure, already in the first promise, given to the fathers of Israel, it was also foreseen that through Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. But this promise was revealed only to Israel and not to the Gentiles. Therefore, the Gentiles praise God for His free mercy, that they, as Israel, out of pure grace received the same blessing, the same salvation. Such praise of God among the Gentiles, as seen from the context, was likewise obtained through Christ's ministry. Christ, in order to glorify God's mercy, sent out messengers of salvation into all lands and gathered from all nations of the earth a people of His own through the preaching of the Gospel.

The apostle again recurs to Scripture and again brings forth, as in 9,25.26; 10,20, that Christ's great and wonderful work, which began just at his time, the conversion of the Gentiles, the flourishing of the Gentile Church, in which the praise of God's mercy resounds, was already attested by Moses and the prophets, and that also therewith God's eternal counsel was fulfilled.

As it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. Ps. 18,49. The Messiah praises the God of His salvation, the help which He experienced from God among the heathen peoples, to those salvation should serve what God had done in Him. Ps. 22.

Verses 10.11:

The news of salvation, that Christ permitted to go abroad into heathen lands, awakens the heathen song of praise, of which both following words of Scripture bear witness. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people, who are His people. Deut. 32,43. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. Ps. 117, 1. The Gentiles along with Israel, as one people, one congregation, should praise God. By praising God with the people of God the Gentiles show that they belong to His people.

Verse 12:

The fourth quotation is from Is. 11,10: And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. Christ, the root of Jesse, should extend His dominion to the heathen peoples through Word and preaching. The result will be that the heathen hope in Him, believe in Him as their Lord and Savior. Faith then proves itself in praise and thanks. All four quotations of Scripture, therefore, refer to the fact that Christ also became the Servant of the Gentiles, and that the Gentiles praise God for His mercy.

Since the apostle presents the New Testament Church as a congregation of believing Israel and converted Gentiles, who both with one accord worship the God and Father of Jesus Christ, it follows that he, by the admonition directed to the Christians to receive one another, especially also wants to recommend the proper brotherly conduct and mutual understanding among the Jewish and Gentile Christians. Such an admonition was in place wherever Jews and Gentiles were united in one congregation and does not necessarily presume dissensions between both parties. At the close of the instruction to the Roman Christians the apostle praises the great, wonderful mystery that Jews and Gentile were now united in one body and enjoins upon his Christian readers, who were of such different descent, the duty to preserve through the bond of peace the unity established by God.

Verse 13:

With a short votum the apostle ends his whole instruction and admonition to the Roman Christians. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Joy and peace, as in 1,7; 14,17, designate the inner state of the Christian. The basic inclination of the Christians is joy, joy in the salvation which they, Jews as well as Gentiles, received. And Christians have peace with God. This peace fills their soul and supports and strengthens it. They have joy and peace in faith, in their Christian faith, in faith in Christ, since Christ has obtained for them the salvation wherein they rejoice and peace with God. And the wish of the apostle is that their faith might be strengthened and so joy and peace be increased, to the end that they might be superabundantly rich in hope. He who rejoices in the present salvation in Christ and has peace with God also confidently hopes in the completion of salvation, in future glorification. And in the measure that joy and peace increase, hope also strengthens. To be sure, it only happens by the power of the

Holy Ghost that Christians, under the manifold afflictions of this time, by which faith must be tested and which stand in the way of their glorification, cling to their hope. And so the apostle desires and entreats for the Christians, as they themselves should entreat, that the God of hope, who gives and works hope, should make them full of joy and peace in faith, so that they thus, in the power of God and His Spirit, full of hope and confidence await and go to meet the blessed goal of their destiny.

Epilogue 14-33

Verse 14:

The apostle has completed the instruction and admonition which he had in view. An epilogue follows, which concerns the whole letter and corresponds to the introduction, 1,8-15. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. The apostle for his part is convinced, although one could think the opposite considering his letter, that his readers, the Roman Christians, for their part, even without his teaching and admonition, are in good, Christian condition. They are full of goodness, Christian conviction and excellence. The apostle is further convinced that his readers are filled with all knowledge and have rightly understood Christian truth. Finally, Paul looks to his readers with all confidence, that, where admonition in doctrine or life yet appears necessary, they are able to admonish one another themselves.

The apostle's confidence in the Roman Christians rests self-evidently on the knowledge that he has concerning the state of affairs in Rome, on the information which he received from others. And he personally knew the most prominent members of the Roman Congregation. Paul's confidence in his readers is well-founded. And that he speaks of it openly is done intentionally. Scholars and hearers of divine Word are urged on to continue in knowledge and in godliness if their pastors and teachers show confidence in them and openly acknowledge what they have known and obtained through God's grace.

Verse 15:

In spite of the good opinion which he had of the Roman Christians, Paul says: Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort. However, what he wrote did not injure fellowship. Pretty boldly the apostle had written unto the brethren in whole parts and discussions of the letter. In the doctrinal section, where he presented the righteousness of faith, he had as strongly and vigorously as possible excluded all work-righteousness. In the hortatory section he emphatically impressed upon the justified and sanctified Christians that they must die and be damned if they henceforth continue to serve sin and live after the flesh. To the Christian who gives his brother offense he had made clear that he thereby helped his brother, for whom Christ died, to damnation.

As putting you in mind was the purpose of the letter. The apostle wanted to remind his readers of what they already knew, had heard and learned from others. All Christians, who know the

truth and stand and live in the truth, still need this reminder, even if there is no moral need or critical condition, so that Christians knowledge and conviction be clarified, promoted and confirmed. Yes, without continual reminder Christians would soon lose what they have. Christian truths run counter to flesh and blood and disappear from the heart if they are not supported by constant teaching, admonition, reminder. However, Paul's reminder in Romans, inspired by God, can and should serve Christians of all times to this end: that they ever better and more thoroughly learn to grasp and understand the highly comforting mystery of their justification and redemption, so that they ever become more joyful in, and certain of, their faith, and ever more willing and fitted unto every good work.

Verse 16:

It was necessary for the apostle to write thus to the Romans because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. God had given him this special gift and grace; Christ, the Lord and Regent of the Church, had given him this office as apostle to the Gentiles. 1,5. It is a priestly office: ministering the Gospel of God. Paul discharges the duties of his office in a priestly way, that is, proclaims the Gospel of God. Nevertheless, the Gospel is not thought of as the offering which Paul brings, but as the means and instrument through which the intended offering is prepared and made ready.

That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. It is first stated that an offering will be brought. The nature of the offering is the second matter. The offering, at which the preaching of Paul aimed among the Gentiles, is the Gentiles themselves. It is a well-pleasing offering, sanctified in the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost had sanctified the hearts of the Gentiles, dedicated them to God. Therefore, God had special pleasure in the offering of the Gentiles. Through the preaching of the Gospel -and that is true of all preaching of the Gospel- the Holy Ghost is given; and through the Holy Ghost the hearts of men are sanctified, renewed, converted to God, as it were, brought to God as a gift and offering. Such an offering has the Roman Christians become, before Paul wrote to them, through the Word, which they had received from others. Nevertheless, Paul has claim and calling to the Gentiles in general. Thus it is his duty also to instruct and strengthen the converted Gentiles, so that they remain what they are and more and more become a well-pleasing, sanctified offering to God. For that reason he had written to the Romans.

Verse 17:

By virtue of his office as apostle to the Gentiles, Paul had written to the Romans and given them the instruction and admonition contained in this letter. In order that his readers might readily understand this grace, which he received from God, he points especially to the result of his previous ministerial activity. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. After Paul was appointed apostle to the Gentiles by God and was entrusted with the Gospel of Christ, he can also now boast of God's affairs,

with regard to his God-appointed calling. To be sure, his boasting, as all his activity, is concluded in Christ Jesus.

Verses 18.19:

He states in what respect he had cause to boast. The goal of his calling was realized. He had accomplished must to make the Gentiles obedient, in order to establish the obedience of faith among the Gentiles. He had by word and deed, above all by his preaching, then also by the example of his life and conduct which bore out his teaching, as also through mighty signs and wonders which strengthened the impression of his preaching, brought many heathen to faith. Nevertheless, not by his own power but by the power of the Spirit of God. The Holy Ghost, who alone works faith, works and rules in the word and work of the preachers of the Gospel.

Verse 18:

In order to ward off all boasting of his own person and ability, the apostle introduces this statement concerning his activity with the words: For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath wrought by me, etc. Thus he is minded: he will in no case attempt to broach something, to boast of something, which Christ has not accomplished through him. What he has accomplished in his office, Christ, He and His Spirit, has brought about through him. The preachers of the Gospel are the instruments of Christ.

Verse 19:

What he had accomplished by word and deed, in the power of Christ and the Spirit of God, the result of his previous ministerial work, the apostle comprehends in the words: So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricu, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. From Jerusalem unto Illyricum he had fulfilled the Gospel of Christ. He names the starting point and the end of his apostolic career. From Jerusalem especially God's Word went out. In Jerusalem Christ had said to Paul, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Acts 22, 21. In Jerusalem Paul had borne powerful witness to Christ. Acts 9, 20ff. Then he had gone out into pagan lands and had pressed forward to Illyricum. The province of Illyricum, which the apostle had visited by way of Macedonia or Greece, formed the westernmost boundary of the eastern half of the Roman Empire. Paul went out from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, describing a circle: he went through the intermediate countries with the preaching of the Gospel, thus making the wide circle through the Roman Orient.

The apostle, however, does not say that he had preached the Gospel in the lands mentioned but that he had fulfilled the Gospel of Christ in this wide circle. He has fully preached, accomplished, completed, brought the Gospel to an end. As long as the Gospel is carried in one province from place to place, it progresses and grows; but if it has been circulated everywhere, so that no place remains, then it has been fulfilled.

The Gospel appears here as a mission which is to be performed. The Gospel has a mission to all peoples of the earth: it should be known and received everywhere. However, not all the

heathen who hear the Gospel accept it, but only those who belong to the fulness of the Gentiles, 11,25. When the fulness of the Gentiles has entered the kingdom of God, has come to faith, along with all Israel, then the Gospel has performed its mission on earth. And so Paul for his part fulfilled the mission of the Gospel in all lands between Jerusalem and Illyricum. He did not preach and work in all places of the Roman Orient, but only in the main cities did he establish the Christian Church. From these places it could easily spread out, of itself, into the surrounding country.

Verses 20.21:

Paul was diligent in his missionary activity, which he brought to a close in the Orient. He glories in this that he preached the Gospel only there where the name of Christ was not yet known. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation. He did not want to interfere with another's work. He follows the maxim of Is. 52,15: But as it is written, To whom he has not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. The kings and peoples of the earth at that time, thus the prophet prophesies, will see something, become conscious of, hear something, which up till then was not proclaimed to them, namely, the report of the Servant of God. This principle, which he especially followed in his missionary activity, did not keep Paul from writing letters to those congregations not established by him, as the Roman and Colossian, and from imparting to these Christian congregations some spiritual gift on his way through. Indeed, he was, according to his God-given grace, the apostle and teacher of the Gentiles.

Verses 22.23.24:

After Paul looks back upon his missionary activity, he looks into the future and gives his readers the plans for his journey. For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. Until now he had enough to do in the Orient. For that reason he was hindered from coming to Rome. Whenever occasion had offered itself for him to make the journey to Rome, this reason, in most cases, had kept him from it, although sometimes other hindrances were also placed in his way. Now however, he had completed his work in the Orient, from Jerusalem to Illyricum: But now having no more place in these parts. And having a great desire these many years to come unto you, he now wants to fulfill this wish as soon as he journeys to Spain. Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you.

This is the apostle's plan for the journey. After he has accomplished his mission in the eastern half of the Roman Empire, he wants to fulfill the Gospel of Christ in the western half, first in Spain, where the name of Christ was not yet known. The way to Spain leads him to Rome. So in passing through, he wants to enjoy personal intercourse with the Roman Christians for a little while, and then he hopes that those delegated by the Roman congregation will accompany him to Spain and possibly at first support him in his missionary work in the far west. For I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. According to reasonably certain tradition Paul actually

carried on missionary work in Spain, yes, perhaps even pushed on to England. To be sure, he came to Rome in an altogether different way than he at first expected. Nevertheless, what he writes further foreshadows that the intended journey to Rome and Spain will not proceed smoothly and peacefully.

Verses 25.26:

But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. Before the apostle departs towards the west, he must first perform a mission in the east. He is now on the point of journeying to Jerusalem to minister unto the saints, unto the Christians living there., For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

Macedonia and Achaia decided to raise a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul calls it "a certain contribution" and means that this gift, even though it was substantial, considering the great generosity of the Macedonian congregations, nevertheless, was small in comparison with what Macedonia and Achaia owed Jerusalem. 1 Cor. 16; 2 Cor. 8, 9. The congregations of Macedonia and Achaia had decided this. Therefore it also pleased them. They did it voluntarily. On the other hand, they were also obligated to the brethren in Jerusalem. The mother-church of Christianity was in Jerusalem, so that from Jerusalem the spiritual blessings of Christianity spread over the world. So it was only proper that the converted Gentiles should minister unto those from whom they had received these spiritual gifts with their temporal goods. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things, verse 27.

Verse 28:

When the apostle has carried out this work and has confirmed this fruit, has sealed this mission of brotherly love unto the saints in Jerusalem, he wants to journey to Spain via Rome. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

Verse 29:

Paul yet adds: And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. He will bring the full blessing of Christ with him. The longer he foregoes personal intercourse with the Roman Christians, all the more joyfully will he speak unto them when he is with them. He is convinced that Christ, who through Him, the apostle to the Gentiles, bestows His blessing upon the Gentiles, will permit the Romans to have a rich measure of blessing.

Verse 30:

With many a fear the apostle prepares for the journey to Jerusalem. Considering earlier experiences he had to be prepared for hostilities and plots on the part of the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem, especially on the part of the rulers of the Jews. He also had to fear that the gift of love from the brethren would not be welcomed by all the Christians in Jerusalem. For in

that congregation there were Jewish-minded Christians, who regarded the work of Paul among the Gentiles with distrust. And so he summons his brethren in Rome to accompany him on his journey with intercessions. Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit. With this admonition he wants to remind them of Jesus Christ and of the Spirit's love. Jesus Christ, their mutual Lord, unites Christians in one fellowship, in which each one can demand intercessions of the other. Love, wrought by the Holy Ghost, determines and drives the Christians to lend each other help in prayer.

Verses 30.31.32:

That he strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. The intercession of the Roman Christians, as the apostle's own prayer, takes on the form of a conflict. There is a hard battle to be fought, a spiritual battle against hostile powers, against the invisible powers of malice, which stand behind the visible adversaries and impede Paul's work, the course of the Gospel. They should pray with him in his prayer - and they would certainly do so because of their love for him - that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

We know from the Acts of the Apostles, 21,17ff., that and how God answered the prayer of Paul and the Roman congregation. In Jerusalem the apostle found no opposition among the saints. He fell into the hands of the unbelieving Jews, but eluded their attempts at murder. And when he then later came to Rome as a captive, he there, unhindered and with joy, for two years preached the kingdom of God and was allowed to enjoy the fellowship of the Roman Christians.

Verse 33:

With the benediction: Now the God of peace, He who is reconciled to us through Christ, with whom and in whom we have peace, be with you all. Amen, the apostle concludes the epilogue of his letter.

Chapter 16

Recommendation of Phebe 1.2

Verses 1.2:

The apostle has ended his letter. He now adds some personal remarks. First, a recommendation of Phebe, who according to all appearances was the bearer of this letter. I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. The Roman Christians should receive her in the Lord, as is proper for the saints, not only show here outward hospitality but hold her in esteem as a sister, and as a fellow Christian, and because of her service. Phebe was a deaconess, a patroness, a

benefactress of the poor, sick, strangers in the congregation at Cenchrea, the eastern sea-port town of Corinth. So may the brethren in Rome especially also render her assistance, in whatsoever affair she had need of them, and thereby reward her faithful service, which she performed to many Christians of her congregation and to the apostle himself. Most likely Paul had been sick during his stay at Cenchrea.

Apostolic Greetings

3-16

Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

A list of greetings follows, which contains names of Christians who were dear to the apostle, for the most part personally known to him and living in Rome at the time. Because he had not yet seen the Roman congregation explains why Paul greets by name those members of the congregation whom he knew. When he wrote to congregations which he established himself and personally knew, it never occurred to him to select a number of the members and distinguish them through special greetings. At the same time, by mentioning all personal connection which he had, he wants to secure the bond with the Roman congregation, which was very dear to his heart.

The first greeting concerns the Jewish couple, Aquila and Priscilla, who are known to us from the Acts of the Apostles. "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus." They were exiled from Rome by an edict of Emperor Claudius and had met the apostle in Corinth. There, undoubtedly through his ministry, they were won for the Lord. Then Paul had taken them along to Ephesus, where they unfolded their Christian zeal. Acts 18; 1 Cor. 16, 19. Now we find them again in Rome. It was quite natural, after the edict of Claudius had lost its force, for them to return home. And since they were wealthy and the journey from Rome was not difficult, it is not strange that they some years later again visited the Ephesian congregation, which had become dear to them during their exile. 2 Tim. 4, 19. Paul mentions Priscilla or Prisca first, presumably because she was more active

in promoting the interests of Christ than her husband. He commends both of them to the Roman Christians as his helpers in Christ Jesus, as his co-laborers in the Gospel and thinks of a special kindness which he had experienced of them. They had once, presumably in Ephesus, saved his life at the risk of their own. For this all Gentile congregations owed them gratitude, for they had saved the life of the apostle to the Gentiles. At the same time, Paul greets "the church that is in their house," with which he was unacquainted. In the larger cities the Christian assemblies for divine worship were held in different localities, because one house would not hold them. As in Ephesus, so also in Rome, Priscilla and Aquila had offered their home to such an assembly of a part of the congregation.

We are otherwise unacquainted with the following persons. Epænetus is called "the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ." He was the first of the Achaeans converted to Christ and so was a Gentile Christian, since with him began the winning of Achaia for Christ. Achaia was a pagan land, even though Jews lived there. Of Mary, her name after a Jewish Christian, it is stated that she had labored much for the apostle. Andronicus and Junia Paul calls his relatives, kinsmen, in order to stress the twofold fellowship according to which he greets them. They belonged to the same people and were, on the other hand, his fellow-prisoners, that is, as he himself, were won from the world, from Judaism, by Christ. These two kinsmen and fellow Christians of the apostle were held in high esteem by the apostles, the Twelve, as they had come to faith in Christ before Paul.

While the apostle simply calls Amplias "my beloved in the Lord," Stachys "my beloved," he mentions that Urbane had been active with him in the service of Christ, that Apelles had proved himself to be a Christian. With the words "salute them which are of Aristobulus' household" and "greet them that be of the household of Narcissus" are meant domestic servants or slaves of Aristobulus and Narcissus, who, therefore, became Christians and were known to the Apostle. Such lesser brethren, Christian slaves, Paul loves and esteems also; and he wants the Roman congregation to esteem them just as much as the renowned and respected men of the Church. Calling Herodion "my kinsman" does not indicate that all who lack this epithet were Gentile Christians. Tryphena and Tryphosa worked nobly in the service of the Lord. The beloved Persis had "labored much in the Lord." Among faithful workers one is more zealous than the other. Here, of course, we must think of an activity suitable to Christian women, not of the preaching of the Word.

Very likely Rufus is the son of that Simon of Cyrene, who carried the cross of the Lord and whom Mark intentionally called the father of Alexander and Rufus. Mark 15, 21. Then the surname "chosen in the Lord" is all the more in place, since the wonderful way in which Simon and his family were led to Christ appears, in all probability, to be a verification of their election. The mother of Rufus imparted motherly love and care to the apostle, perhaps in Jerusalem. For that reason he also calls her his mother.

In verses 14.15 two series of names are mentioned, concerning whom no distinguishing marks are added. One dare not assume then that the apostle did not regard them, as those

previously mentioned, as dear Christians, as beloved in the Lord, but that they were farther removed from and not very familiar to him. "And the brethren which are with them" and "all the saints which are with them" point to a second and a third private-home-congregation. Thus Paul has sent his greetings to the whole Roman congregation.

"Salute one another with an holy kiss." The Roman Christians should display the Christian fellowship of love with a holy kiss, as an expression and seal thereof. The section closes with the words: "The churches of Christ salute you." The Christian congregations in general are meant. Without a doubt the many congregations, which knew of his plan to journey to or to write to Rome, had charged the apostle with express greetings.

Warning Against False Teachers

17 - 20

Verse 17:

In this postscript the apostle adds a warning against false teachers. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. He admonishes his brethren to beware of those who teach a doctrine opposed to the Christian doctrine, which they had received, and thereby cause dissensions and give offense and occasion to apostasy. Since this warning is so brief and supplementary, it shows that false teachers had as yet not entered the Roman congregation. Their description is so general that one must not think exclusively of the apostles' Judaistic adversaries. Paul thinks of such adversaries who had already opposed his Gospel, as the false teachers and apostles of the circumcision who had troubled the congregations of Galatia and Achaia, or as the deniers of the resurrection whom he attacks in First Corinthians, whose error was undoubtedly of heathen origin. Even though the Roman Christians were not immediately threatened, these false teachers could very easily direct their attention upon the Christian congregation of the metropolis, which was everywhere talked about, and also there disseminate their teachings. In this case the Roman Christians should examine and be on their guard against these teachers of new doctrines, avoid them, not listen to and have fellowship with them.

It is God's command that Christians avoid not only false doctrines, but also false teachers, and remain separate from such denominations that tolerate false doctrines and teachers. All unionism, which unites truth and error into the same ecclesiastical organization, is condemned by this word of the apostle, which is God's Word. Similar warnings are found in 2 Thess. 3,6; Tit. 3,10; 1 Cor. 5,11; 2 John 10.

Verse 18:

One should avoid such false teachers, for they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. They are not concerned about winning souls for the Lord Christ, but they pursue their own interests and desires, seek only to acquire a great following in order to have a pleasant and

luxurious life. And they deceive the hearts of the simple, who see no evil in them, through hypocritical words and fine-spoken oratory. They can speak very piously, so that simple Christians will not see through their self-interested design and error, and be easily misled. The only safe way of guarding oneself against their harmful influence is to avoid and shun them completely.

Verse 19:

However, the apostle explains how he wants this warning to be understood and why he expressly uttered it. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. He knows that the Roman Christians are obedient. Their obedience to the Gospel is known everywhere. Concerning that he is happy. Yet, he wants them to be wise with regard to the good, to increase in the knowledge of pure, wholesome doctrine; on the other hand, to be pure and simple with regard to evil, not to become entangled in evil, in false teachings. False doctrine is an evil thing, a work of the devil, a satanic lie. False teachers, who cause dissension and offense, are not servants of Christ but servants of Satan, who through them desires to make the Christians lose faith and salvation.

Verse 20:

The apostle finally points to this arch-enemy, but assures the brethren that the God, who has received them into His peace, will not allow the devil to destroy His saving work in them. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The day is not far off when the Lord will completely crush Satan and deliver His own from all evil, from all machinations of the evil enemy. This is reminiscent of Gen. 3,15. The promise of the first Gospel is objectively fulfilled once and for all in Christ's death on the cross, but it is constantly also subjectively realized within Christ's Church by her every victory of faith over Satan, judged and overcome by Christ's atoning death. And on that Day the final, conclusive victory of the woman's seed will take place, when He will cast the devil, the old serpent, into the abyss.

The apostle closes with a benediction: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Other Greetings

21-24

Verse 21:

In this postscript he greets the Roman congregation for certain persons, who were with him at the time. Above all, for Timotheus my workfellow, his faithful co-laborer, known well throughout all Christendom. Timothy's name is here not at the end of the letter, as in other Pauline letters, written to congregations to which he was personally known and had rendered valuable services. Timothy was farther removed from the Roman congregation; his call was not, as Paul's, to the whole world. Yet, as the helper of the apostle to the Gentiles he had a warm interest in the welfare and success of the Roman congregation, and he showed this by his greeting. And Lucius, and Jason, and

Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. This Jason is no doubt identical with that Jason of Thessalonica, mentioned in Acts 17,5, and Sosipater with Sopater of Berea, Acts 20,4. The assumption is possible that these two along with Lucius were the delegates of the Macedonian congregation in the matter of the collection and accompanied Paul from Corinth to Jerusalem.

Verse 22:23:

Now Tertius, to whom Paul dictated this letter, writes: I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord. He assures the brethren in Rome, with whom he became very intimate through this letter, that he is closely united with them in Christ. Paul then dictates further: Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Under the hospitable roof of this Gaius, whom he himself baptized, 1 Cor. 1,14, he had written this letter. His house stood open to all Christians, who had come to Corinth from abroad. Erastus the chamberlain of the city, the treasurer of Corinth, saluteth you. And Quartus a brother, who was at all events a member of the Corinthian congregation. All these Christian brethren, who charged the apostle with greetings to Rome, in any case had personal friends and acquaintances in the Roman Congregation.

Verse 24:

That Paul at the end of the postscript repeats the benediction: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, is not strange. The Roman Christians should know how his heart was open to them.

Concluding Doxology 25 - 27

It is fitting that the apostle should conclude this letter with its rich content in such a flow of ardor and fulness of thought. The Holy Ghost, who has spoken through Paul, once more lifts the writer's heart and mind to God. After the apostle in this letter, as in no other, has presented the whole plan of God's salvation, he looks reverently to God, the Author of salvation, and to Christ Jesus, the perfect Mediator, praises and thanks Him in advance for His saving work which He will surely perform in the readers of the letter. The closing doxology corresponds especially to the introit of the letter.

Verse 25:

The doxology begins with the words: Now to him that is of power to establish you. To Him be glory who can strengthen you! The purpose of Paul's intended visit to Rome was to strengthen the Roman Christians. 1,11. That was also the purpose of this letter. However, God alone has the power to strengthen and establish the Christians in their estate.

According to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ. As in the beginning of the letter, 1,1ff., so here at the end Paul appeals to his Gospel, to the Gospel which was entrusted him by the Lord. Its content is nothing else than the preaching of Jesus Christ. Thus in 1,1ff., it was directly called "the gospel....concerning his Son Jesus Christ."

Verse 26:

According to the context the mystery is the mystery of Christ and the salvation in Him. The same was hidden in eternity, has now, however, been revealed. According to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, rather: in eternal times, but now is made manifest. The eternal times extend from eternity through the eons of the pre-Christian era until the time designated by "now." Already in eternity God has resolved to redeem the human race through Christ. This resolution was first hidden in God, Eph.3,9, and was from the beginning of the world kept secret from the children of men. Now, however, since Jesus Christ has come and has carried out God's saving counsel, the secret of eternity has been revealed, in that God revealed it to His holy apostles, who in turn proclaimed it to the world.

And by the scriptures of the prophets. The proclamation of the Gospel was mediated through prophetic Scriptures, since the apostles according to the example of Christ connected their teaching and preaching to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. "Scriptures of the prophets" points back to Old Testament time and economy. Already in prophetic Scriptures God had noted His eternal plan of salvation through the Spirit. In the beginning it was stated that God had promised the Gospel of His Son by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures. 1,2. So already the children of the Old Covenant hoped in Christ. Nevertheless, the mystery of eternity could with right be designated as something secret because the Savior had not yet appeared, because complete understanding of prophecy was lacking, because the report concerning Christ was limited to a small area and hidden to the world at large. Now, however, the apostles have drawn the prophetic Scriptures out of their relative secrecy, have fully revealed prophecy and have shown not only to Israel, but also to all the Gentiles that all prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

The Gospel was and is being preached, as the apostle continues, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. The eternal God, who decrees beyond time and eternity, has granted this last era of the world the preaching of Jesus Christ. He gave the apostles, the New Testament preachers in general, the express mandate to reveal the secret of eternity to all peoples of the earth. The preaching of the Gospel is in this present era until the end of the world the greatest and most important work on earth. It serves to the salvation of souls. The purpose of the preaching of the Gospel is to establish among all Gentiles the obedience of faith, which alone makes men righteous before God and saves them.

The connection of this whole description of the Gospel is now clear. According to this Gospel God can and will strengthen the Christians. The Gospel, which is appointed by God to accomplish the obedience of faith, brings along with it that they who have come to faith also persevere in faith. The God, who works faith through the preaching of Jesus Christ, can and will through this same preaching strengthen and keep the believers in saving faith unto the end.

Verse 27:

To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever.
Amen. (Rather: To God only wise, through Jesus Christ, to whom
be glory for ever. Amen) In Jesus Christ, the salvation of
 the world, in the eternal counsel of God's love, now fulfilled
 and revealed, in the preaching of Jesus Christ which goes
 through all lands from one people to another and everywhere
 works some fruit unto eternal life, the fruit of the obedience
 of faith, God's incomparable wisdom, which surpasses all human
 thought and understanding, has glorified itself. To this only
 wise God, who will certainly complete His saving counsel also
 in the readers of the letter, the apostle, in the name of the
 readers of the letter, gives praise and glory through Jesus
 Christ, the Mediator of salvation. He also gives praise and
 glory to Jesus Christ. The doxology to God runs out into a
 doxology to Jesus Christ. He wishes to consider Jesus Christ,
 the Mediator of salvation, as the "coordinated Cause of sal-
 vation," as in the introduction of the letter, 1,7. He co-
 ordinates the Father and the Son, who is of the same essence,
 of equal power and glory with the Father.

In these concluding words the apostle summons his
 Christian readers to say with Him: Glory be to the Father and
 to the Son! Yes, glory also to the Son, Jesus Christ, who, as
 the Father, is God over all, the only wise God, the Source
 and Author of our salvation! To Him be glory forever! Amen.